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ABSTRACT

A training course for employees who must meet the public is presented. It includes the following sessions: (1) You Meet the Public Face-to-Face, (2) You meet the Public by Telephone, and (3) You Meet the Public by Letter. (CK)

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ED 018429

TRAINING GUIDE TG 5-13

Face-to-face...

... by telephone

by letter...

you meet the public

HE 014 401

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION • AUGUST 1956

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GENERAL INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE COURSE LEADER

1. Scope

This five session training course may be used in the following ways:

a. As initial training for employees who have been assigned duties which involve meeting the public.

b. As refresher training for employees who have been meeting the public for some time.

c. As refresher training for supervisors who are responsible for the activities of employees who meet the public.

The course may be given in entirety or in part, depending on the needs of the trainees. However, Session I, "You Meet the Public Face-to-Face", should be of value to any employee, since, as the session brings out, all VA employees meet the public to some degree either on the job or off the job in the community.

2. Course Leaders

The device of using a number of course leaders adds variety to training sessions. This guide lends itself particularly well to this device. For instance, one leader can conduct Session I, another can lead Session II, and a third can conduct Sessions III, IV, and V. More than one leader can also be used for the three sessions on meeting the public by letter. If this is done, it is suggested that the leader observe those of the three sessions preceding the one that he leads.

3. Adaptation

The course leader should adapt the prepared text, verbally and otherwise, to his own style. He may substitute his own wording so long as he covers the important points and maintains the general management point of view contained in the sessions. He may draw on his own knowledge and experience to illustrate the principles under discussion in terms of situations familiar to the trainees. The course leader may also modify the prepared text to make it more appropriate for the particular group and to the particular circumstances in which it is given. This is particularly true when the course is used for refresher training. For example, a number of the points in the guide are given by the leader. With an experienced group the leader can use questions so as to have the group supply these points. In all cases he should devote special attention to drawing out the trainees so that they participate actively in the discussion.

4. Length and Frequency of Sessions

A suggested schedule is one session a week over a period of five weeks, but, of course, the scheduling can be altered as local conditions require. The length of each session will vary between $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours, depending on the extent to which the course leader amplifies or illustrates the material, and upon the amount of trainee participation.

5. Format

The outline to be used by the leader is shown in double-column form. On the left side of each page is a "topical outline" containing key words and phrases. The leader may insert additional notes or symbols for his own use in the presentation. He may also indicate the time that he wishes to devote to the various sections of the session. On the right side of the page is the "discussion material". The important features of the organization of this material are as follows:

a. Major subdivisions of each session are identified and separated by horizontal lines.

b. Notes to the leader: These are printed in italics so that they will not be confused with material to be presented to or drawn from the group.

c. Blackboard items: Important items to be drawn out by the discussion and written on the blackboard are enclosed in a box. The blackboard work in this guide lends itself well to being prepared in advance. If desired, this can be done by use of a chart pad, flip charts, flannel board, or other suitable device.

d. Questions: Key questions are used throughout the sessions to stimulate discussion. They are indicated by a capital "Q" and printed in heavy type. In addition, at many points the notes to the leader instruct him to bring out material by discussion, but leave it up to him to develop these questions.

e. Summary sheet: The sessions are preceded by a summary sheet which includes the purposes of the session, the content or major topics, the appendices, and any necessary notes. The appendices which are given to the trainees are further identified as numbered handouts, as for example, HO #1.

6. Additional Practice

If desired, practice may be added to any of the sessions. The summary sheet for Session II gives some suggestions for practice in meeting the public by telephone. Appendix V-B gives suggestions for practice in analyzing and improving letters.

7. Requisitioning

The various parts of the course may be requisitioned in the normal manner. Information which may be of help in preparing requisitions is as follows:

a. TG 5-13, "You Meet the Public": This is an instructor's guide and can be used indefinitely. The number of copies requisitioned should be based on the number of instructors to be assigned at any one time.

b. Handouts: Appendices I-A, II-A, II-B, and II-C are Handouts #1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. They have been prepared for distribution by sets. Order one set for each trainee identifying them as "Handouts to TG 5-13".

c. Supplement to TG 5-13, "Workbook for You Meet the Public by Letter": This workbook is used by the trainees who are given Sessions III, IV, and V, and is kept by them when the sessions are completed. Order one for each trainee.

d. Pamphlet 5-5, "Meeting the Public": This is used as a handout for Session I, You Meet the Public Face-to-Face. Order one for each trainee.

SESSION I

YOU MEET THE PUBLIC FACE-TO-FACE

SUMMARY SHEET

A. PURPOSES

1. To discuss the meaning of a "service agency" and the types of contacts through which service is given.

2. To discuss the importance of meeting the public properly.

3. To examine the need for training in meeting the public.

4. To discuss the basic rules in properly meeting the public face-to-face.

5. To stimulate interest in improving techniques in meeting the public face-to-face.

B. CONTENT OF SESSION

Topics for discussion	Pages
Introduction	2
Importance of Meeting the Public Properly	4
Training in Meeting the Public	5
Basic Rules in Meeting the Public Face-to-Face	6

C. APPENDICES

Title	Pages
I-A (H.O. #1) Demonstration No. 1	9
I-B Demonstration No. 2	13
I-C Demonstration No. 3	15

Appendix II-A (H.O. #2), is also distributed at the end of this session.

D. NOTES

Two additional demonstrations are provided should it be desired to supplement the basic demonstration with more specific techniques. Appendix I-B, "Demonstration No. 2", is designed to illustrate good receptionist techniques; Appendix I-C, "Demonstration No. 3", is designed to illustrate good practice on the part of guards. If these demonstrations are used, it is suggested that copies of the dialogue be furnished to the trainees for discussion purposes, as was done with the basic demonstration.

Of course, demonstrations may also be developed locally for specific positions, for the inclusion of local "ground rules" and regulations, or for the heightening of interest through use of local color.

SESSION I

YOU MEET THE PUBLIC FACE-TO-FACE

INTRODUCTION

Topical outline	Discussion Material
Explain plan of procedure	This series of meetings will be of the informal, discussion type. Please feel free to ask questions whenever you wish. I, in turn, will have a number of questions to ask you. As we go along I will have handouts for you that summarize the points that we discuss. There is no need for you to take notes, but, of course, you may do so if you wish.
The VA is a service agency	Let us start off this session by considering first the statement "The VA is a service agency." You probably have heard or read this statement many times. The Administrator defined it very concisely in a letter to all employees dated November 3, 1953, when he said -- OUR BUSINESS IS PEOPLE
Meaning of service agency	A service agency does its work through meetings of one person with another. You are one of these two persons. You represent the organization, the VA, and you are endeavoring to render service. The other person is the veteran. He is seeking the type of aid furnished by the VA.
Types of employees normally thought of as meeting the public face-to-face	The number of these meetings and the number of employees involved in these meetings are tremendous. Take, for example, our topic for today--face-to-face contacts. You think normally of such contacts being made by guards, elevator operators, receptionists, contact representatives, and similar types of employees.
Other types	**Q. Can you think of other types of employees in this (hospital, regional office, etc.), who meet the public face-to-face, either as an incidental part of their duties or even as an accidental part of their duties?** *Draw from the group examples, such as those below, which are appropriate to the station.* - Those having contact with patients or relatives and friends of patients such as physicians, nurses, hospital aides, therapists, technicians, social workers, dietitians, etc. - Those having contact through visits of the public such as Educational Benefits Specialists, Counseling Psychologists, Loan Guaranty Officers, Training Officers, etc. - Any employee who stops in the corridors to give directions to visitors. - Any employee who assists persons who wander into offices by mistake.
Contacts where language is not used	We can broaden this even further if we consider that language is only one part of courtesy.

Q. Can you suggest some examples of poor contacts with people where you do not talk to them?

Draw from the group examples, such as those below, which are appropriate to the station.

- The employee who hurries past a visitor who obviously is about to ask for directions.

- The typist who mumbles to herself in a disgruntled manner within hearing of somebody waiting to see her boss.

Every employee who speaks to or is seen by the visitor is meeting him

We can say, then, that face-to-face meetings are not limited to those employees whose duties specifically include meeting the public. On the contrary they occur when an employee speaks to, or is seen by, the visitor who enters the doors of our (hospital, regional office, etc.).

Contacts after working hours

We can broaden this still further if we consider contacts after working hours. The agency policy says that employees when off duty should consistently conduct themselves in a manner that will not embarrass or discredit the VA or injure its reputation.

Promoting understanding of the mission of the installation

Looking at this in a somewhat different way each of you can assist in promoting an understanding in the community of the mission of this (hospital, regional office, etc.). For example,

Give one or two appropriate examples of the following types:

- An employee of a VA hospital which is primarily for the care of neuro-psychiatric patients is talking with a neighbor who has old fashioned ideas about the care and treatment of such patients. He proudly tells the neighbor about his job and in so doing gives the neighbor an idea of the modern methods used in VA hospitals.

- An employee of a Loan Guaranty Division is talking to a neighbor who has heard differing stories about the length of time taken to process GI Loans. He tells the neighbor about the various safeguards that have been set up to protect the veteran and the average time taken for the different stages. The neighbor is convinced that the applications are handled speedily, efficiently, and with concern for the veterans' interests.

With the addition of this last type of contact we can justifiably say that every employee of this station meets the public.

Q. What are the different ways in which you can meet the public?

Draw answers from the group and list them on the blackboard, so that it looks like this--

Ways of meeting the public
___face-to-face

___by telephone

___by letter

Ways of meeting the public
_____face-to-face
_____by telephone
_____by letter

IMPORTANCE OF MEETING THE PUBLIC PROPERLY

Topical outline	Discussion Material
Even when you meet the public infrequently, you are concerned because--	We have indicated that the number of meetings with the public differs with the employee.
	Q. Why should you <u>still</u> be concerned even when you meet the public infrequently?
	Draw from the group or supply the items indicated below for placement on the blackboard. Below each item is suggested material for discussion.
1. You are a VA employee	1. You are a VA employee.
	The VA is the agency through which a grateful American public gives certain specific rights and benefits to those men and women who have served in the armed forces of the United States. It is incumbent upon VA personnel, therefore, to give veterans and the public the best and most efficient service possible.
2. You can give better service through use of courtesy and understanding treatment	2. You can give better service through use of courtesy and understanding treatment.
	A job which is done in a courteous and understanding manner is a job which is done better and, further, is a job which is less likely to require redoing.
	For example, information given over the phone in a curt, abrupt manner is likely to result in justifiably indignant calls to superiors or outside sources. A letter which is patronizing in tone or unclear in content stimulates additional correspondence. A veteran once complained that a VA letter referred to "the above-captioned insurance." He wanted to know who had captioned his insurance without his permission and how could he get it uncaptioned. A lack of understanding of the receiver of the letter had caused another letter and the job had to be done twice.
3. A favorable opinion toward the VA makes for better service	3. A favorable public opinion toward the VA makes for better service.
	The job of VA is to provide service. However, if we give courteous and efficient service we can be almost certain that we will have good public opinion. Courtesy will usually be returned by courtesy. This in turn means more effective service.
	For example, if a veteran has a good opinion of VA he is more likely to understand the necessity of completing a particular form used to determine whether his claim meets legal requirements. This attitude makes it easier for you to give good service. If he has a poor opinion of VA he is more likely to look upon the form as "unnecessary red tape." This attitude makes it more difficult for you to give good service.

4. You are the VA	4. You are the VA. People tend to base their impressions on their own experience, however limited it may be. If a person has had one contact with the VA and that contact has been poor, then he is very likely to consider the whole agency as being poor. Haven't you ever said something like "Oh, that outfit. It's terrible. I went there once and the service was awful." The tendency of people to judge the whole by the parts they know is illustrated by the story of the blind men and the elephant. One blind man felt that the elephant's side and said he was a wall. Another touched a leg and said he was a tree. The third blind man stroked the elephant's trunk and said he was a snake. The fourth blind man grasped the tail and said he was a rope. The public opinion of the VA is the sum of the attitudes of all of the public towards all of the agency. In a real sense then--you are the VA.
5. You are in the spotlight	5. You are in the spotlight. This may occur in a number of ways. Firstly, the public sets very high standards for public officials and civil service employees. In many ways these standards are higher than those the public sets for itself. Regardless of whether this is or is not fair, you must live up to these higher standards. The person who goes to a government agency for a particular benefit may have convinced himself in advance that he is fully entitled to the benefit. This means that he is overly critical when he is told that he cannot receive the benefit or even when advised that he must first go through what he considers as tiresome formalities. In this case you have to explain the facts in a manner designed to take the sting out of disappointment. This is a difficult thing to do. Lastly, the person who comes to the VA with a problem may be emotionally disturbed. Extra care is needed to prevent a scene, an indignant phone call, or a complaining letter. For these reasons you are in the spotlight and you must be concerned with the problems of meeting the public.

TRAINING IN MEETING THE PUBLIC

Topical outline	Discussion Material
Why give training in meeting the public?	You will probably grant that meeting the public in the proper manner is important. However, you might wonder whether such traits as tact, diplomacy, and courtesy are things that a person either has or doesn't have. **Q. Why, then, give training in meeting the public?** *Draw from the group or supply the following points:*

-Desirable traits can be strengthened and developed	- The persons who are most effective in meeting the public are those to whom such traits as tact, courtesy, and diplomacy come naturally. However, such traits can be strengthened and developed by training.
-Certain skills and knowledges must be learned	- In addition there are certain skills and knowledges pertaining to these traits with which people are not born and which they can't be ordered to have. They must learn and acquire them by training.
How does such training help the experienced employee?	Again you might say, "This is very good for the new employee, but how about the employees who have been with VA for some time? Haven't they shown that they measure up on this score?" Yes, they have. As a matter of fact we can be proud of our record when you consider the tremendous number of contacts the VA makes with the public and the way in which they have been handled.
	Q. Even here, however, training can be helpful. Can you suggest why this is so?
-It guards against let downs	- There may be a tendency on the part of employees whose main duties concern meeting the public and who have performed the same duties for a long time to let down or to consider each person as just another case. Training helps to check this tendency and to avoid falling into bad habits.
-It emphasizes the importance of even a small number of contacts with the public	- Employees whose main duties do not involve meeting the public may not have realized, because of this, the importance of the contacts that they do have. They, indeed, may benefit more from training than the employee whose duties have required him to be concerned with meeting the public.
-It assists supervisors in giving necessary training and in setting an example	- Training can also help supervisors in knowing what to look for and in giving their subordinates such on-the-job training as may be necessary. Also, the best way to keep employees interested in meeting the public properly is for supervisors to set an example and to allow their "spirit" to be caught by those around them.

BASIC RULES IN MEETING THE PUBLIC FACE-TO-FACE

Topical outline	Discussion Material
	We have been speaking generally about meeting the public. Let's focus our attention now on one of the ways we mentioned--meeting the public face-to-face.
	YOU MEET THE PUBLIC FACE-TO-FACE
Regardless of extent of contacts, basic principles apply	We have indicated that the extent of this type of contact varies a great deal. In any case, however, there are certain basic rules which apply to the face-to-face type of contact. We will illustrate these by a demonstration.
Demonstration No. 1	*Present demonstration. See Appendix 1-A.*
Discussion of Demonstration No. 1	I have copies of the demonstration for you. Let's go over it and see what the information clerk did wrong and what would have been the correct way.

HANDOUT

Pass out copies of Appendix 1-A, "Demonstration No. 1" and folders in which trainees can keep the handouts. Go over the demonstration item by item and bring out the points below by discussion. The numbers refer to the pertinent paragraphs in the demonstration and the test describes the points which should be brought out by discussion of the indicated paragraphs in the demonstration.

Courtesy can't be turned on and off	2: Courtesy can't be turned on and off. To be courteous to the public we must be courteous toward each other. Language is only one part of courtesy. Looks, gestures, attitudes and habits of dress are all meaningful. For example, clothes should be neat and hair should be combed.
Recognize a visitor promptly	6, 7: Recognize a visitor promptly. If you can't avoid a delay, explain it. Take a friendly attitude. Information given in a friendly, cordial way is much more effective than that given in an abrupt, impersonal manner.
Give attention to the individual's problem	9: Give attention to the individual's problem.
Consider the importance of the problem	10,11: Consider the importance of the problem to the individual and the state that he may be in. Show a sympathetic attitude.
Be a good listener	13: Be a good listener. Let the visitor talk.
Be patient and maintain self control	14,15, 16,17: In the demonstration the visitor was provoked to irritation. There may even be instances, however, when you have to take unjustifiable abuse from a visitor. In any case, be patient and maintain self control. The situation only gets worse when you display your aggravation.
Put yourself in the other fellow's place	18,19: Don't be like the clerk in the demonstration. Put yourself in the place of the visitor. Provide him with the same interest, attention, and common courtesy that you would like to receive.
Know your job	20,21, 22,23: Know the requirements of your job. Know the regulations, procedures, and laws pertaining to your work.
Don't play favorites	24,25: Don't play favorites. If it is necessary to go out of turn, explain the situation.
Consider each person as an individual	28: Consider each person as an individual and not as just "another case". The visitor is not a 675; he identified himself as Richard Roe.
Avoid slang and jargon	30,31, 32: Avoid slang and the use of words that may be familiar to you but which may be pure jargon to your listener.
Be specific	33,34: Be specific. Give detailed, not vague, instructions on the next step. Be familiar with the functions of offices that tie in with your activity. Even those of you who have little contact with the public should know how to direct the lost visitor to a specific office or to the appropriate contact office or information clerk.
Answer only questions you are authorized to answer	35,36: Answer only those questions you are authorized to answer. Resist the natural tendency to assume some of the duties of other employees.

Avoid the "charity touch" or "patronizing air"	37,38: Avoid the "charity touch" or the "patronizing air". Stay away from any implications that the visitor is applying for gratuities or that you expect gratitude in return for services.
Consider the public as "customers" or "clients"	39,40: Consider the public as "customers" or "clients". It is true that there is no firm in competition with the VA, but the public is entitled to the same interest and consideration that you would supply if such competition did exist.
Remember that you represent your agency	43,44: Remember that you represent your agency. Richard Roe, the visitor, said, "Some outfit this is." To him the clerk is the agency and Mr. Roe has a very poor opinion of it. The clerk's poor attitude toward his job, his agency, and its clients has resulted in a dissatisfied "customer".
The rules must be applied with discretion	Of course, courtesy includes discretion. For example, take the rule on being a good listener. There will be occasions when a visitor looks upon the chair beside your desk as a psychiatrist's couch. Being a good, courteous listener does not mean letting him spend the day with you, and he may be prepared to do just that. You will have to figure out how to get rid of him tactfully, so that you can fulfill your obligations to other visitors.
Try for the human touch	We might establish a guideline in one sentence--strive for the human touch. One of the rules in particular provides a clue toward achieving this touch. Try to achieve the human touch by putting yourself in the other fellow's place.
The rule of "putting yourself in the other fellow's place" provides a key --it helps the new employee to learn --it helps experienced employees to guard against let-down	Putting yourself in the other fellow's place provides a key to achieving the human touch and to all the other rules of courtesy. If you try to provide him with the same interest, attention, and common courtesy that you would like to receive, then you're well on your way to achieving the human touch. For the new employee the necessary skills and knowledges will be easier to learn. For the experienced employee this rule will guard against the let-down to which day-to-day activities expose us all.
HANDOUTS 	Here is a pamphlet that summarizes a number of the points that were mentioned in our discussion. I am also going to hand out a quiz called, "What Is My Telephone I.Q.?" I would like you to give yourselves this quiz before our next session. It covers most of the points that we will discuss at that time. *Distribute VA Pamphlet 5-5, "Meeting the Public" and Handout No. 2, "What Is My Telephone I.Q.?" (Appendix II-A.)*
Close session	*Close session.*

APPENDIX I-A
(TG 5-13)

H. O. #1

DEMONSTRATION NO. 1

INSTRUCTIONS

The instructor acts as commentator for the demonstration. There are also required three participants--the information clerk, a man; the first visitor, a man; and the second visitor, a girl. If possible, the three participants should not be members of the training group. It is desirable that the participants have some acting ability and that they memorize the dialogue. This is particularly true for the information clerk and the first visitor. If circumstances do not permit memorization, each participant should have a copy of this handout.

DIALOGUE

1. Instructor: This demonstration uses the "wrong-way Murphy" technique. Murphy is a fictitious character who was used in training films to demonstrate the wrong way of doing things. Let's observe the information clerk in this demonstration and figure out what he is doing wrong so we can discuss later what the correct way is.

   This clerk doesn't work for the VA. As a matter of fact I hope he doesn't work for anybody. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is too horrible to think about.

   For this reason the demonstration describes an imaginary situation in the Office of Space Travel Research. Now that I've prepared you, let's proceed. (Goes to door and calls) Mr. Clerk, won't you come in please.

2. Information Clerk: (Enters room. He isn't badly dressed, but is quite untidy. His hair is rumpled, his tie is askew, and he is generally disheveled. He smiles at the instructor and then glowers at the group.) Not a very intelligent looking bunch, is it? (Goes over and sits at table. Starts shuffling through pile of papers.)

3. Instructor: Next we have a visitor. He has a problem and to him it is a vexing one. He has been having trouble finding the person who can help, so he is somewhat disturbed. (Opens door or gives some other prearranged signal and then sits down with the group.)

4. First Visitor: (Enters with worried look. He calls to the Information Clerk.) Is this the place where I can get information?

5. Information Clerk: (Without looking up.) Yeh.

6. First Visitor: (Crosses over and stands beside the table of the information clerk who continues to shuffle papers. After a while First Visitor sits down and coughs to attract attention.)

7. Information Clerk: (Looks up irritably.) Keep your shirt on. I'm getting to you. (Shuffles papers a few seconds more.) OK. Whadda you want?

8. First Visitor: My name is Richard Roe. This is about something that I've given a lot of thought. Finally, I decided to do something about it.

9. Information Clerk: (While First Visitor speaks, Clerk resumes shuffling papers.) Whadja say?

10. First Visitor: I said I finally decided to do something about it. It's a very difficult thing.

11. Information Clerk: They always are.

12. First Visitor: Well, I figured that I'm single and I have no dependents, so why not?

13. Information Clerk: So why not what? Get to the point, will you.

14. First Visitor: You're a civil servant aren't you?

15. Information Clerk: Yes.

16. First Visitor: Well, how about some civil service?

17. Information Clerk: Look at him: He's a comedian too.

18. First Visitor: You'd feel differently if our positions were reversed.

19. Information Clerk: Well, they're not. So don't worry about that.

20. First Visitor: Well, I can't get any courtesy, so I might as well tell you what I want and get it over with. I want to apply to be a crew member for the first space ship.

21. Information Clerk: Space ship? They're not accepting applications yet. It will be announced in the papers.

22. First Visitor: It was in yesterday's papers. Don't you know about it?

23. Information Clerk: (Pauses a second and pulls out a paper) Oh, yeah. Here it is. They're accepting applications beginning today.

24. Second Visitor: (The second visitor, a young girl, enters and walks up to table.) Hello, Jimmy darling, you said I could get those papers without waiting.

25. Information Clerk: Sure thing, honey. (Hands her some papers) Fill these out and bring them back to me.

26. Second Visitor: Thanks, Jimmy darling. (Leaves)

27. First Visitor: (Sarcastically) How about me, Jimmy darling?

28. Information Clerk: (Turns his gaze away from departing girl.) Oh, yeah. You're a 675.

29. First Visitor: A which?

30. Information Clerk: You fill out these papers. It says here you take an exam to see if your reactions are OK by testing for spatial perception, psychomotor coordination, visual acuity, and mechanical aptitude.

31. First Visitor: What does that mean in English?

32. Information Clerk: Search me -- I didn't write it.

33. First Visitor: Where do I take these when I get them filled out?

34. Information Clerk: On the next floor. They do something with them up there. They'll tell you where to take them.

35. First Visitor: Are they pretty strict? What are the chances?

36. Information Clerk: They're supposed to tell you that upstairs, but every screwball in town is applying, and I don't think you've got a chance.

37. First Visitor: Would it help if you looked over my papers when I get them filled out?

38. Information Clerk: I've got other things to do. I've given you too much time already.

39. First Visitor: Yeah! Well it's a good thing you're not in business. You wouldn't get my trade.

40. Information Clerk: It's tough Mac, but it just so happens that there's no other place for you to take your business.

41. First Visitor: Let me tell you -- I pay your salary, Buddy. Some outfit this is. You haven't heard the last of this yet. (Stamps angrily out of the room.)

42. Information Clerk: (Walks over to door.)

43. Instructor: (Stands up and says) Thank you, Mr. Clerk, for showing us how you represent your agency.

44. Information Clerk: Represent? I just work here. I'm going to lunch now. (As he exits says) How about the nerve of that 675? Some people just don't have any courtesy.

APPENDIX I-B
(TG 5-13)

DEMONSTRATION NO. 2

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of demonstration: To illustrate good receptionist practices.

Scene: VA Office.

Personnel: Information Clerk (or any secretary).
Visitor
Contact Representative (or any supervisor).

(Instructor should ask the group to compare the demonstration with the good practices that have been discussed. Select for the demonstration trainees who have participated actively during the discussion.)

* * * * * * *

DIALOGUE (Each participant should have his own copy of the dialogue.)

Visitor: (Enters room and approaches receptionist.)

Information Clerk: (Smiles) Good morning. May I help you?

Visitor: Maybe. (Hesitates) I'm trying to find out if I can get my GI insurance back.

Information Clerk: One of our contact representatives will be glad to talk to you about that. They're all busy right at the moment, but someone'll be free in 2 or 3 minutes.

May I have your name, please?

Visitor: Willoughby. John Willoughby.

Information Clerk: (Smiling) Thank you. How do you spell your last name?

Visitor: W-I-L-L-O-U-G-H-B-Y.

Information Clerk: (Writes down name on slip of paper. Just as she finishes the phone rings. Instructor can ask the group to imagine that the phone rings at this point, or a small bell can be used.) Excuse me, Mr. Willoughby.

Visitor: Sure.

Information Clerk: (Picking up imaginary receiver) Reception desk, Miss_____. (Pause as though listening) Mr. Jones is out right now. Is there any message? Yes, Mr. Burns, I'll tell him as soon as he comes in. Goodbye. (Makes note of message on pad, turns to visitor), Sorry to keep you waiting, Mr. Willoughby. If you'll have a seat (indicating nearby chair), I'll call you as soon as one of our representatives is free.

Visitor: Thanks.

Information Clerk: (Shuffle papers at desk for a few seconds; then look at contact representative to see if he is free.) All right, Mr. Willoughby, Mr._____will see you now. (Get up from desk and conduct visitor to contact representative's desk; hand contact representative slip with visitor's name on it; introduce visitor to contact representative) Mr._____this is Mr. Willoughby.

Contact Representative: How do you do, Mr. Willoughby. (Glance at slip as though checking name) Won't you have a chair? (To information clerk as she departs) Thank you Miss_____.

Instructor: Thank you for your help.

* * * * * * *

DISCUSSION Instructor may ask as many of the following questions as seem appropriate:

1. Did the information clerk in this demonstration violate any of the good practices which we discussed earlier?
2. Would you have handled this visitor differently? How?
3. Did you notice anything the information clerk did which was particularly good? (Such as writing the visitor's name on a slip of paper and handing it to the contact representative.)

APPENDIX I-C
(TG 5-13)

DEMONSTRATION NO. 3

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Demonstration: To illustrate good practice on the part of guards in handling public inquiries and contacts.

Scene: Entrance to office building in which a VA regional office is located.

Personnel: Guard.
4 visitors.

* * * * * * *

DIALOGUE (The four trainees selected as "visitors" should each be given a number. Each visitor will approach the guard individually in the sequence indicated by his number.)

Visitor #1: Pardon me, can you tell me if the Veterans Administration has an office in this building?

Guard: Yes, Sir. The reception desk for the regional office is on the fourth floor. Take the elevator to your left.

Visitor #1: Thank you.

Guard: You're welcome. (Turn to visitor #2 who is approaching) Yes, Sir.

Visitor #2: Where do I register for a job?

Guard: Are you looking for a job with the Veterans Administration?

Visitor #2: Veterans Administration? Naw, ain't the employment service in this building?

Guard: Oh, you want the ___(name of State)___ Employment Service. If you'll ask the information clerk in the lobby, she can give you the address. Go down the hall and turn left and you'll find the information desk.

Visitor #2: OK.

Visitor #3: (Preparing to leave the building with a bulky brief case.)

Guard: (As visitor #3 passes.) Pardon me, Sir, do you have a release slip for your brief case?

Visitor #3: (Indignantly.) Release slip?

Guard: Yes, Sir. In order to take a package out of the building, you need a release slip signed by someone in the office where you did your business.

Visitor #3: (Still irritated.) Aw, this Government red tape. You mean I can't carry out my own brief case?

Guard: I'm sorry, Sir, but we are responsible for protecting some important equipment and files in this building. If you'll just step into the office of the captain of the guard over there, I'm sure they'll OK your brief case.

Visitor #3: (Mutters to himself as he leaves.) Typical snafu ....!!!

Visitor #4: Say, do you know if Joe Schmultz works in this building?

Guard: I'm sorry I don't. What agency is he with?

Visitor #4: He just started to work here. I think it's the Veterans Administration.

Guard: The Veterans Administration personnel office is in room 323, third floor. They can tell you if this man is one of their employees. Take the elevator to the third floor and turn to your right to get to room 323.

Visitor #4: Right. Thank you.

Guard: You're welcome.

* * * * * * *

DISCUSSION (Thank trainees who participated in demonstration.)

Questions:

1. Did the guard in this demonstration violate any of the good practices which we discussed?
2. Would you have dealt with any of these people differently? Why?
3. Did you notice anything which this guard did particularly well (such as giving accurate directions)?

SESSION II

YOU MEET THE PUBLIC BY TELEPHONE

SUMMARY SHEET

A. PURPOSES

1. To emphasize the importance of effective use of the telephone.
2. To discuss good telephone manners.
3. To provide a basis for personal evaluation of telephone techniques.
4. To stimulate interest in improving telephone techniques.

B. CONTENT OF SESSION

Topics for discussion	Pages
Introduction	19
Voice Impression	19
Telephone Courtesy	20
Receiving Telephone Calls	21
Making Telephone Calls	27
Summary and Closing	29

C. APPENDICES

Title	Pages
II-A (HO #2) What Is My Telephone I.Q.?	31
II-B (HO #3) Demonstrations for Meeting the Public by Telephone	33
II-C (HO #4) Telephone Tips	37

D. NOTES

1. Additional items may be worked into this session, if desired. Examples of such items are as follows:

   a. Making long distance calls.

   b. Use of the local telephone directory.

   c. Arrangements which secretaries and their superiors should set up for the handling of calls. For example, under what circumstances should the secretary determine the identity of callers?

   d. Try-out of telephone practices with the use of a voice recording machine.

2. Telephone quiz: As previously indicated, Handout No. 2, "What Is My Telephone I.Q.?", (Appendix II-A), is distributed at the end of Session I, and the trainees are asked to give themselves the quiz before Session II. No discussion of the quiz is contained in the text of Session II as the main purpose is to prepare the trainees for what is to come. If the instructor so prefers, however, the quiz may be discussed briefly at the beginning of Session II, e.g., to bring out the examples of bad telephone manners. Another variation which may be used is to distribute the quiz toward the end of Session II and have the trainees take and discuss it in part or in whole.

3. Training films: If desired, the session may be supplemented with a training film. The films "Telephone Courtesy" and "A New Voice for Mr. X" are available from the Central Office Film Library. Films such as "The Invisible Receptionist" and "Thanks for Listening" may be available on a free loan basis from your local telephone company.

4. Assistance from the local telephone company: Many of the Associated Bell Telephone Companies have promoted the correct use of the telephone. Your local company may be able to give assistance, in addition to the loan of films mentioned above, such as guest lecturers, additional brochures for handouts, loan of dummy telephones, and loan of voice recording machines when the station does not have such equipment.

SESSION II

YOU MEET THE PUBLIC BY TELEPHONE

INTRODUCTION

Topical outline	Discussion Material
Open the session	In the first session we discussed meeting the public face-to-face. In this session we shall discuss the second way in which you meet the public - by telephone. YOU MEET THE PUBLIC BY TELEPHONE *If this session is given separately, desired sections of the general portion of Session I can be used for introduction.*
Examples of bad telephone manners	To start you thinking about this topic I handed out a little quiz at the end of our first session. While we won't go over the quiz as such, we will discuss in this session the points it brings out. In doing this quiz you might have been reminded of some of the bad telephone manners that you have encountered. **Q. What are some of the telephone manners that particularly irritated you?** *Draw from the group answers such as those shown below. Draw enough answers to stimulate the group but don't try to make the list exhaustive.* - Slowness in answering. - Saying only "hello" so I don't know whether I have the right number. - Keeping me waiting on the line too long. - Grouchy, unfriendly tone of voice. - Transferring me to the wrong party. - Banging the receiver in my ear.

VOICE IMPRESSION

Topical outline	Discussion Material
Voice impressions are deceptive What makes telephone conversations different from other meetings?	You have probably formed an impression of somebody over the phone and then found by acquaintance that the person actually was quite different. **Q. What caused this, or more particularly, what are the things that make telephone conversations different from meeting the public in other ways?** *Draw from the group or supply the answers indicated below. Under each item is material which may be used for discussion.*

-Invisibility	- You are invisible. When meeting people face-to-face poor diction or a flat voice can be overcome by such things as a winning smile, a hearty handshake, or a warm personality. On the telephone mental pictures of your personality are formed only by your voice. Everything depends on what you say and how you say it.
-Deadening effect	- The telephone has a tendency to deaden your voice. This tendency is greater than you suppose. This means that you must make a special effort to compensate for this deadening effect.
-Unexpected demands	- The telephone makes sudden, unexpected demands on your time. In preparing correspondence you can usually spend what time is necessary to prepare a good one-way conversation. You can't, however, prepare yourself for most incoming telephone calls.
Creating a favorable voice impression	**Q. Since your telephone voice is you, what can you do to make sure that your voice creates a favorable impression?**
-Position the phone correctly	- Position the phone correctly. Speak directly into the transmitter. Your lips should be a half inch from the mouthpiece. Avoid the tendency to let the mouthpiece drop during the conversation.
-Speak clearly and naturally	- Speak clearly and naturally. Enunciate distinctly and move your lips freely. Don't mumble and don't shout; both are irritating. Do speak up positively and crisply.
-Try to develop a friendly and pleasant voice	- Try to develop a friendly and pleasant voice. Develop a cheerful, pleasant, yet businesslike voice. The tone of your voice should indicate alertness and a genuine desire to help. Try to get a smile into your voice.
-Don't overdo the friendly voice	- Don't overdo the friendly voice. In developing a friendly voice, don't go to the extreme of an over-gracious manner or one that is cloyingly sweet.

TELEPHONE COURTESY

Topical outline	Discussion Material
Rules of telephone courtesy	Many of the rules of courtesy that we discussed in the analysis of the demonstration in Session I apply also to telephoning. There are some others which have a particular application to using the telephone. **Q. What are some of the rules of courtesy which apply particularly to using the telephone?**
-Ask questions tactfully	- Ask questions tactfully.

	For example, in many instances it is necessary to ask a person's name. A polite "May I tell him who is calling, please?", is better than an abrupt "Who are you?", or "Who's calling?".
-Choose the right words	- Choose the right words. Much of the courtesy expressed through gestures and facial expressions can be supplied on the telephone by such expressions as "I'm sorry", "Thank you", "Please", "Would you mind?", "I'll be glad to."
-Try to be helpful	- Try to be helpful. If the call is for information that you have, the problem is simple. Suppose, however, that the call is for somebody else who is not in. First--
a. Volunteer your help	a. Volunteer your help. Even though the call is for somebody else you may find that you can give the desired information. This will save a return call. Supposing, however, that only the person called has the information. Then--
b. Offer to take a message	b. Offer to take a message. If the call does not concern your work or that of your office, then--
c. Transfer calls to the correct person	c. Transfer calls only to persons who you know can satisfy the caller. Don't transfer calls on the chance that somebody might be able to help. The "run-around" or the "merry-go-round" is guaranteed to irritate the public. Be sure the person to whom you refer a call is the one who can handle it. To help in this-- (1) Get the consent of the other person before transferring a call. (2) Give complete information. (3) Be familiar with the station directory. (4) Try to become informed about the functions of other divisions and the names of people in them.
-Close every conversation before hanging up	- Close every conversation before hanging up. Give a definite indication that the conversation is finished. There are many suitable phrases, but the use of "Goodbye" is always safe.

RECEIVING TELEPHONE CALLS

Topical outline	Discussion Material
Receiving telephone calls	We have discussed the problem of insuring that your voice creates a favorable impression and we have examined the rules of telephone courtesy. Now let's focus our attention on the techniques of receiving telephone calls. RECEIVING TELEPHONE CALLS

We have a series of demonstrations to illustrate these techniques. Our actors are Miss Russell, a secretary, and Mr. Green, a caller. Again our situation is fictional. Miss Russell knows how to meet the public. After each demonstration we will analyze and discuss the techniques she uses. This handout containing the dialogue of the demonstrations will help you in the discussion.

HANDOUT

Distribute HO #3, "Demonstrations for Meeting the Public by Telephone".

Demonstration No. 1

Present Demonstration No. 1.

Let's go through this demonstration and see if we can chart the proper techniques in receiving telephone calls.

The material for discussion of all the demonstrations is arranged in the following order:

1. *A question to start discussion on the rule which is illustrated. Where necessary, the suggested answer is also indicated.*

2. *The rule which is illustrated and which is to be supplied by the group. As indicated by the boxes, these rules are displayed by being placed on the blackboard or by being prepared in advance. Because of the number of rules it is recommended that they be prepared in advance by use of a chart pad, flannel board, flip chart, or other suitable device.*

3. *Under the boxed material there are listed further points, if any, which may be brought out by the discussion.*

Q. First, do you recall how many times the phone rang before Miss Russell answered? (Twice)

1. Answer the phone promptly

1. Answer the phone promptly.

a. Telephone is for speedy communication

a. The telephone is for speedy communication, and there is little tolerance of delays in its use.

b. Answer at end of first ring or before third ring

b. Answer the phone at the end of the first ring, if possible. Be sure to answer before the third ring.

Q. What did Miss Russell do with her work when she answered the phone? (She put it aside.)

2. Give full attention to the telephone conversation

2. Give full attention to the telephone conversation.

a. Don't try to finish what you are doing

b. Don't continue conversations

a. Don't try to finish whatever you are doing when the phone rings.

b. Don't lift the receiver and continue a conversation with someone in your office.

Q. When Miss Russell first spoke what sort of manner did she use? (Pleasant, friendly.)

3. Greet the caller pleasantly

3. Greet the caller pleasantly.

Q. What information did Miss Russell's opening words give to Mr. Green?

4. Identify the office and yourself

4. Identify the office and yourself.

a. Identification of the office

a. Identification of the office--

(1) Tells the caller immediately whether or not he has reached the right office.

(2) Should be adapted to the situation. In some cases it may be preferable to use the name of the person in charge or the extension of the phone.

b. Personal identification

b. Personal identification--

(1) Tells the caller immediately with whom he is speaking.

(2) Makes it easier for the caller to call back the person who answers.

(3) By a woman should specify "Miss" or "Mrs." so that the caller will know how to address her.

(4) Should usually omit the word "speaking" since this may confuse. For example, "Jones speaking" may sound like "Joe speaking."

Miss Russell's boss apparently wished to know the identity of his callers, so she asked, "May I tell him who is calling?"

Q. What point does this illustrate that we mentioned under the rules of courtesy which apply particularly to using the telephone?

5. Ask questions tactfully

5. Ask questions tactfully.

a. Request identity only when needed

a. Request the identity of the caller only when necessary.

b. Try expression of helpfulness

b. Try an expression of helpfulness in place of a question. For example, "Perhaps I could help you", in place of "Do you want to speak to him personally?"

c. Requests rather than demands	c. Word your questions so that they sound like requests rather than demands. Miss Russell used such a question rather than demanding "Who is this?"
	Q. After Mr. Green identified himself what did Miss Russell do? (She used his name.)
6. Use names	6. Use names.
a. Everybody likes to have name used	a. Everybody likes to have his name better known.
b. Helps individual approach	b. Use of names helps the individual approach and avoids the case approach.
c. Be sure of name	c. Be sure of the name before you use it. If you are not sure, verify it first.
Demonstration No. 2	The next demonstration is also on receiving calls. Let's see what we can get out of this one. *Present Demonstration No. 2.* You notice that the demonstration was the same up to the point when Mr. Green asked to speak to Mr. Young.
	Q. What did Miss Russell do in response?
7. Give information willingly	7. Give information willingly.
a. Don't be a clam	a. Don't be a telephone clam.
b. Give "whereabouts" and "whenabouts"	b. Give the "whereabouts" and "whenabouts" of the person called without being asked.
c. Leave "whereabouts" and "whenabouts"	c. Similarly, when you leave your desk, give your "whereabouts" and "whenabouts."
	Q. After Miss Russell told when her boss would be back, what did she do?
8. Volunteer your assistance	8. Volunteer your assistance.
You may be able to--	
a. Complete the call	a. You may be able to supply the desired information and complete the call.
b. Take a message	b. You may be able to take a message and prevent a callback.

c. Refer the caller for immediate help

c. You may be able to refer the caller to someone who can help him immediately.

In this case Miss Russell found out that the question was one she could answer, but that she would have to leave the line.

Q. What rule did she use?

9. When leaving line give caller a choice of waiting or being called back

9. When leaving the line, give the caller a choice of waiting or being called back.

a. Lay the receiver down gently when leaving the line, so as not to cause a bang in the listener's ear.

b. Remember that your comments may be heard when you are off the line.

Q. When she found out that it would take longer than expected, what technique did she use?

10. Explain waits

10. Explain waits.

Q. And when she came back on the line what practice did she illustrate?

11. When coming back on line, make introductory remark

11. When coming back on the line, make an introductory remark to get the caller's attention.

Q. Going back to the point where Miss Russell started to work out the information, did you notice anything particularly good?

Draw out responses such as "She had everything at hand", "She had everything she needed." Ask group to word this as a rule.

12. Be prepared to render quick service

12. Be prepared to render quick service.

a. Have pad and pencil ready

a. Have pad and pencil ready to take notes.

b. Have source materials at hand

b. Have manuals and other source materials at hand.

Q. Did you notice how Miss Russell ended the conversation?

13. End calls courteously and with indication of finish

13. End calls courteously and with definite indication that the conversation is finished.

Q. What did she do after ending the conversation?

14. Hang up receiver gently

14. Hang up the receiver gently.

a. Pause, or b. Push down signal button	a. Pause before replacing the receiver on the cradle, or b. Push down the signal button before replacing the receiver.
Demonstration No. 3	Suppose that Miss Russell could not supply the needed information or that Mr. Green still wanted to talk to Mr. Young. Let's see what happens in Demonstration No. 3. *Present Demonstration No. 3.*
Discussion of trite expressions	Let's pick up this demonstration at the point where Miss Russell says that Mr. Young is in a meeting. **Q. What is another expression that is sometimes used here?** *Draw out response, "He's in conference." Bring out the fact that Miss Russell's expression is preferable because it isn't pompous.* There are quite a few trite expressions used in telephoning, particularly in this situation where you are telling a caller that the boss isn't in. **Q. Can you suggest some of them and what impression they create on a caller?**
Examples of trite expressions	*Draw out information such as the following:*
"He's tied up"	"He's tied up" - This creates a visual image of the boss being entangled in a snarl of cord, or perhaps red tape.
"He's busy"	"He's busy" - The unspoken reaction might be, "So what. So am I," or "That's what he's paid for."
"He's engaged"	"He's engaged" - This might bring a facetious reaction, perhaps spoken, such as, "Who's the unlucky girl?"
	Q. How could we summarize this as a rule?
15. Avoid trite expressions	15. Avoid trite expressions.
	Q. When Mr. Green said he wished to talk to Mr. Young personally, what did Miss Russell indicate?
16. Take messages willingly	16. Take messages willingly.
a. Get facts	a. Get all the important facts.
b. Be correct	b. Get all details correctly.
	Q. During all three of these demonstrations Miss Russell was pleasant and friendly, but at the same time what was she able to do? (She kept to the business at hand.)

17. Keep your conversation brief and business like	17. Keep your conversation brief and business like. *If desired, at this point you can discuss the techniques of completing SF 63, Memorandum of Call.*

MAKING TELEPHONE CALLS

Topical outline	Discussion Material
Making telephone calls	Let's look at this problem of telephoning from the other end, i.e., making telephone calls. There are many occasions when you have to call members of the public. Even when we speak to somebody in another agency, that person is also a member of our public. Many of the rules we have just placed on the blackboard apply when you are on the calling end. There are also a number of additional rules which apply specifically to making calls. MAKING TELEPHONE CALLS Our friends Miss Russell and Mr. Green will show us the first demonstration on this.
Demonstration No. 4	*Present Demonstration No. 4.* **Q. Did you notice what happened before Miss Russell dialed?** (She looked up the number.)
1. Be sure of number	1. Be sure of the number you are calling.
a. Don't guess	a. Don't guess.
b. Use sources	b. Use available sources of information.
c. Keep up-to-date list	c. Keep an up-to-date list of frequently called numbers.
d. Use tie lines	d. Use tie lines, when available.
	Q. If Miss Russell had dialed a wrong number, what should she do?
2. Apologize for mistakes	2. Apologize for mistakes.
a. Wrong number is not the fault of the person called	a. A wrong number is not the fault of the person called.
b. Be pleasant when you're called by mistake	b. It is equally courteous to be pleasant when someone calls you by mistake.

Q. When the phone started to ring what rule did Miss Russell illustrate?

3. Allow time to answer (a full minute or ten rings)

3. Allow time to answer.

a. A good rule is to wait a full minute (about ten rings) before hanging up.

Q. When Mr. Green said "hello" did Miss Russell respond quickly?

Wait for positive response.

Q. What rule did this illustrate?

4. Be ready to talk when party answers

4. Be ready to talk when the person called answers.

a. If somebody places a call for you, be ready on the phone when your party answers.

After Miss Russell said "good morning" she did something that we developed as a rule for receiving calls.

Q. What would that be?

5. Identify yourself

5. Identify yourself.

a. If helpful, also identify your office and your purpose in calling.

Q. If Miss Russell knew her conversation would be quite lengthy, what might she have done?

6. Ask if it is convenient to talk, if call is likely to be lengthy

6. Ask if it is convenient to talk, if the call is likely to be lengthy.

When Mr. Green identified himself, Miss Russell told him why she was calling.

Q. What impression did she leave with you? (She knew what she was going to say.)

7. Plan your conversation before calling

7. Plan your conversation before calling.

Demonstration No. 5

Let's look at our last demonstration which illustrates some additional points about making calls.

Present Demonstration No. 5.

Q. What did Miss Russell do when she returned to her desk? (She saw she had received a call and returned it right away.)

8. Return calls promptly	8. Return promptly all calls received in your absence. Mr. Green was uncertain at first whether he could help. In such circumstances some callers adopt a negative approach. **Q. What words do they use to show this?** *Draw responses such as, "You probably can't help me but . . ", "Probably you wouldn't know about this, but... ".* Yes, Miss Russell avoided this negative approach, which is our next rule.
9. Avoid negative approach	9. Avoid the negative approach when asking for information or seeking assistance. **Q. Instead, what did Miss Russell do?** (She asked to leave a message.)
10. Leave messages willingly	10. Leave messages willingly.
a. Secure information or leave message	a. Try to complete your business on one call by securing information or leaving a message.
b. Leave effective messages	b. Leave effective messages.
c. Volunteer extension and best time to call back	c. Volunteer your extension and the best time to reach you in case you request a "callback".

SUMMARY AND CLOSING

Topical outline	Discussion Material
Summary	In summing up, remember that there is a big difference between a telephone conversation and a face-to-face conversation. In a telephone conversation everything depends on your voice--on what you say and how you say it.
Apply the rules	Because of the factor of invisibility you may not concentrate on the call as you would if the person calling were right before you. You can overcome this by applying the rules that we have discussed in this session. These are summarized in a hand ut that we have for you.
Remember the key point, "Phone as you would be phoned"	The key point to remember is similar to the one we mentioned in the first session about putting yourself in the other fellow's place. PHONE AS YOU WOULD BE PHONED

	To change very slightly what we said at the close of the first session--if you try to provide the person at the other end of the line with the same interest, attention, and common courtesy that you would like to receive, then you're well on your way to phoning as you would be phoned.
HANDOUT	*Distribute HO #4, "Telephone Tips".*
Close session	*Close session.*

APPENDIX II-A
(TG 5-13)

H. O. #2

WHAT IS MY TELEPHONE I.Q.? *

For each of the following items place a check in the column which applies:

	Always	Usually	Rarely or Never
1. I answer telephone calls promptly (at the end of the first ring, if possible).			
2. I have a pad and pencil ready for making notes.			
3. I use identifying phrases at the beginning of all calls, incoming and outgoing, giving my name and, as appropriate, my office.			
4. I speak directly into the telephone mouthpiece, not over nor under it.			
5. I speak clearly and naturally, without mumbling or shouting.			
6. I end calls courteously and with a definite indication that the conversation is finished.			
7. I hang up the telephone gently.			
8. When it is necessary to leave the line, I give the caller a choice of waiting or being called back.			
9. After leaving the line, I come back and explain waits if it takes longer than expected.			
10. I avoid transferring calls whenever possible. However, if I must transfer a call, I transfer it to the person who I know can satisfy the caller.			
11. Before transferring a call I give complete information to the caller.			
12. I plan conversations in advance, keeping them brief and business like without sacrificing friendliness and courtesy.			
13. After dialing I allow time to answer. (About ten rings or a full minute.)			
14. I apologize when getting a wrong number.			
15. When placing a call I am ready to talk when the person called answers.			
16. If my conversation is likely to be lengthy, I ask if it is convenient to talk.			
17. I keep and use an up-to-date list of frequently called numbers.			

* This quiz is adapted by permission from one prepared by the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company.

	Always	Usually	Rarely or Never
18. I return promptly all calls received in my absence. ---			
19. The tone of my voice reflects a reasonably pleasing personality.----------			
20. I try to remedy the lack of face-to-face contact by generous use of phrases such as "Thank you", "Please", "Would you mind?", "I'll be glad to." ---			
21. I use the names of the persons with whom I speak. ---			
22. I avoid trite expressions which might make my speech sound mechanical and stereotyped.----------			
23. I supply information willingly and don't force callers to pry it out of me.----------			
24. When I return to the line, I first attract the attention of the other person by some introductory remark, such as, "I have that information now." -------			
25. I keep in mind that to the caller my voice may be the VA.----------			
TOTAL ---------			

To find your Telephone I.Q.

1. Total the number of checks in the "Rarely or Never" column and multiply by 4.
2. Total the number of checks in the "Usually" column and multiply by 2.
3. Add the two sums.
4. Deduct that figure from 100. This is your I.Q.

MY TELEPHONE I.Q., IS: _____

A score of 80 would indicate reasonably good telephone service on your part - but continue to strive for 100 as an objective.

APPENDIX II-B
(TG 5-13)

H. O. #3

DEMONSTRATIONS FOR MEETING THE PUBLIC BY TELEPHONE

INSTRUCTIONS

Two people are needed for these demonstrations - Miss Russell, a secretary, and Mr. Green, a caller. It is preferable that the persons chosen for the demonstrations not be members of the training group. The following equipment is needed: 2 dummy telephones, a small bell. After each demonstration pause for analysis as described elsewhere in this training guide.

Demonstration No. 1

Mr. Green: (Dials number and rings twice.)

Miss Russell: (Is working as the phone rings. Puts pencil aside at first ring and answers phone during the second ring.)

Miss Russell: Records Division, Miss Russell.

Mr. Green: May I speak with Mr. Young?

Miss Russell: May I tell him who is calling?

Mr. Green: This is Mr. Green.

Miss Russell: Just a moment, Mr. Green.

Demonstration No. 2

Mr. Green: (Dials number and rings twice.)

Miss Russell: (Is working as the phone rings. Puts pencil aside at first ring and answers phone during the second ring.)

Miss Russell: Records Division, Miss Russell.

Mr. Green: May I speak with Mr. Young?

Miss Russell: Mr. Young is out of the building and will be back at 10 o'clock. May I ask him to call you then . . . or perhaps I could help you.

Mr. Green: Perhaps you can. My name is Green and I would like to know if you have any records on the old Laredo building and how long would it take to get copies made.

Miss Russell: Yes, Mr. Green, we have some records, but it will take about half a minute to figure out how long it would take to get copies made. Would you like to wait or would you prefer to have me call you back?

Mr. Green: I'd like to wait, please.

Miss Russell: Surely, will you excuse me a moment please? (She pauses a second and lays the receiver down gently. Then she takes pad and pencil at her right hand, opens a book on her desk, and starts to calculate. After half a minute she picks up the receiver.)

Mr. Green, this will take a little bit longer than I expected--about another half a minute. Would you like to wait?

Mr. Green: Yes, I would.

Demonstration No. 2 (continued)

Miss Russell: All right sir. (Completes calculations and picks up the receiver.) Thank you for waiting, Mr. Green. It will take two weeks to prepare the records you want. Would you like that done?

Mr. Green: No. For the moment I wanted to know the time involved. Thank you very much for your help. Goodbye.

Miss Russell: You're welcome. Goodbye. (Hangs up receiver gently.)

Demonstration No. 3

Mr. Green: (Dials number and rings twice.)

Miss Russell: (Is working as the phone rings. Puts pencil aside at first ring and answers phone during the second ring.)

Miss Russell: Records Division, Miss Russell.

Mr. Green: May I speak with Mr. Young?

Miss Russell: Mr. Young is in a meeting right now. I expect him back in an hour. May I ask him to call you then . . . or perhaps I could help you.

Mr. Green: This is something that requires my speaking to Mr. Young. Would you ask him to call me?

Miss Russell: I'd be glad to, sir. (Takes up pencil and pad of SF 63.) May I have your name?

Mr. Green: Green, and I'm on extension 2062.

Miss Russell: That's Mr. Green on extension 2062. Did you want me to give him any particular message, Mr. Green?

Mr. Green: I don't believe so. Thank you. Goodbye.

Miss Russell: You're welcome. Goodbye. (Hangs up receiver gently.)

Demonstration No. 4

Miss Russell: (Starts to dial a number. She pauses a moment reflectively, then looks up a number in a telephone directory. She dials the number and rings five times.)

Mr. Green: (After five rings comes to the table and lifts receiver.) Hello.

Miss Russell: Good morning. This is Miss Russell. I'm calling for Mr. Young, Chief of the Records Division at the Historical Office. May I speak to Mr. Green?

Mr. Green: This is Mr. Green.

Miss Russell: Mr. Green, Mr. Young asked me to check with you to make sure that the meeting in your office at two o'clock tomorrow is still satisfactory.

Mr. Green: Yes, that's still satisfactory.

Miss Russell: Thank you very much. Goodbye.

Mr. Green: Goodbye.

Demonstration No. 5

Miss Russell: (Returns to her desk, picks up and reads an SF 63, and dials a number.)

Mr. Green: (Answers phone during second ring.) Hello.

Miss Russell: Good morning. This is Miss Russell returning Mr. Marshall's call. Is Mr. Marshall in?

Mr. Green: He isn't here. This is Mr. Green from another office. I don't know whether I can help you.

Miss Russell: Would you be kind enough to take a message, Mr. Green? Mr. Marshall wanted to know if he could visit Mr. Young at the Historical Office at 2 o'clock tomorrow. Would you tell him that this will be satisfactory.

Mr. Green: (As he writes.) Mr. Young will see him at 2 o'clock tomorrow at the Historical Office.

Miss Russell: That's right. Mr. Young's Room Number is 110. In case Mr. Marshall wants to call back at any time, the number is Suburbia 3-5162, extension 342.

Mr. Green: (As he writes.) Room 110. Suburbia 3-5162, extension 342.

Miss Russell: That's correct. Thank you very much, Mr. Green. Goodbye.

Mr. Green: Goodbye.

APPENDIX II-C
(TG 5-13)

H. O. #4

TELEPHONE TIPS

I. Creating a Favorable Voice Impression.

1. Position the phone correctly.
2. Speak clearly and naturally.
3. Try to develop a friendly and pleasant voice.
4. Don't overdo the friendly voice.

II. Telephone Courtesy.

1. Ask questions tactfully.
2. Choose the right words.
3. Try to be helpful.
   a. Volunteer your help.
   b. Offer to take a message.
   c. Transfer calls only to persons who you know can satisfy the caller.
4. End calls courteously and with a definite indication that the conversation is finished.

III. Two-Way Rules. (The following rules apply whether you are receiving or making a telephone call.)

1. Greet the other person pleasantly.
2. Identify yourself and, as appropriate, your office.
3. Give full attention to the telephone conversation.
4. Use names.
5. Give information willingly.
6. Avoid trite expressions.
7. Take or leave messages willingly.
8. Keep your conversation brief and business like.
9. Hang up the phone gently.

IV. Receiving Calls.

1. Answer the phone promptly.
2. Be prepared to render quick service. (Keep pad and pencil near phone.)
3. Volunteer your assistance.

4. When leaving the line, give the caller a choice of waiting or being called back.

5. Explain waits.

6. When coming back on the line, make an introductory remark to get the caller's attention.

V. Making Calls.

1. Be sure of the number you are calling.

2. Allow time to answer.

3. Plan your conversation before calling. Be ready to talk when the person called answers.

4. Apologize for mistakes.

5. Ask if it is convenient to talk, if the call is likely to be lengthy.

6. Avoid the negative approach when asking for information or seeking assistance.

7. Return promptly all calls received in your absence.

PHONE AS YOU WOULD BE PHONED

SESSIONS III, IV, AND V

YOU MEET THE PUBLIC BY LETTER

SUMMARY SHEET

A. PURPOSE

1. To emphasize the importance of meeting the public through clear, concise, courteous, and friendly letters.

2. To discuss the 4-S Formula for writing letters.

3. To stimulate interest and provide practical experience in writing clear, concise, courteous, and friendly letters.

4. To discuss ways in which supervisors can help their subordinates to write better letters.

B. CONTENT OF SESSIONS

Session	Topics for discussion	Pages
III	Introduction	40
	The 4-S Formula - Shortness	42
IV	Simplicity	51
V	Strength	61
	Sincerity	65
	What About Supervisors?	73
	Closing	74

C. APPENDICES

Title		Pages
V-A	Demonstration	75
V-B	Practice Sessions	77

The "Workbook for You Meet the Public", Supplement to TG 5-13, is distributed during Session III.

D. NOTES

1. Use of the Workbook gives the trainees practice in applying specific rules. If desired, additional sessions may be added to give practice in reviewing longer portions or even entire letters. Appendix V-B gives some suggestions.

2. The 4-S Formula and much of the material in these sessions is adapted from *Plain Letters*, a pamphlet prepared by the National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration. The Archivist of the United States has given permission for the use of this material. Reading *Plain Letters* is good preparation for the instructors selected to lead these sessions.

SESSION III

YOU MEET THE PUBLIC BY LETTER

(Beginning)

INTRODUCTIO.

Topical outline	Discussion Material
Open the session	In the other sessions we discussed meeting the public face-to-face and by telephone. In this session and the next two sessions we shall discuss the third way in which you meet the public -- by letter. YOU MEET THE PUBLIC BY LETTER *If these sessions are given separately, desired sections of the general portion of Session I can be used for introduction.*
Reputation of government writing	What kind of impression does your writing leave? To put it in other words - what kind of "hand" do you write? Is it like a mailed fist, which is hostile and threatening? Is it like the smooth gestures of a sleight-of-hand artist with a now-you-see-it, now-you-don't motion? Or is it like a sincere, friendly handclasp? Unfortunately many government "hands" are of the first two types. Government writing has a reputation for a stiff, cold manner with long, involved sentences weighed down by big meaningless words. This style has been called gobbledygook, federalese, governmentalese, and probably less polite names. Humorous definitions have been written for many of the words commonly used by people who write in this style. For example, take the sentence "Further substantiating data is necessary." The translation is, "We've lost your stuff. Send it again." To say that something is under consideration means, "We never heard of it," while to say that it is under active consideration means "We're looking in the files for it."
Need for continuous efforts to improve our letters	Much of the reputation of government writing is deserved. The VA has had letters used as both horrible examples and good examples. The average VA letter lies somewhere between these two extremes. The important thing, however, is that it is especially important for our writing to be good.
Goal of clear, concise, courteous, and friendly letters	The goal is to write letters which answer the questions that the public asks and to do this in a clear, concise, courteous, and friendly manner. This goal requires that we make continuous efforts to improve our letters. Those who compose or dictate a number of letters would probably agree to the need for continuous efforts to improve them. **Q. But what about those who use form letters or pattern letters? Do they need to be concerned, and, if so, why?**

	Draw out or supply the following answer: Form letters and pattern letters also should be improved whenever possible. The persons who use them daily are in a good spot to suggest changes.
Advantages of improving our letters	In the other sessions we have discussed the advantages in improving our meetings with the public. **Q. What particular advantages do we gain by improving our letters?**
-Better public relations	- Developing better public relations by writing in a more friendly and personal manner.
-Improved service	- Improvement in service to veterans by our plain answers to specific questions or more clearly stating our requests for information.
-Increased efficiency and economy	- Increased efficiency and economy. Simple, clear writing will help you to think more clearly; it will enable you to write faster as well as better; and it will cut down on the number of letters we and our correspondents send to each other.
What makes letters different from and more difficult than other meetings?	In the session on telephoning we discussed why it was different from others ways of meeting the public. **Q. Can you suggest the ways in which meeting the public by letter is different and more difficult?** *Draw from the group answers such as those indicated below. Under each item is material which may be used for discussion.*
-You are unseen and unheard	- You are both unseen and unheard. In meeting a person face-to-face you can take advantage of such things as a winning smile and a hearty handshake; in speaking to persons on the phone you can develop a friendly voice. When you write, you are both unseen and unheard. The letter is the sole representative of yourself and the VA.
-Letter is one-way conversation	- A letter is a one-way conversation. You cannot watch a person's face to see when he is puzzled by what you are saying. He cannot ask a question when he is puzzled. Since a letter is a one-way conversation, you must try to anticipate his questions.
-Belief that big words and long sentences are impressive	- Many people believe that we impress our readers with big words and long, involved sentences. Efforts to impress in this manner not only rob letters of clarity, sincerity, and naturalness, but often arouse the anger of the reader toward the writer and the agency he represents. Simplicity is the essence of dignity.
-It is easier to cling to old habits in writing	- It is easier to cling to old habits in writing than in speaking. We no longer use "Your most obedient servant" and similar terms of the Elegant Eighties, but some of us use other outworn and discarded phrases. We can get away with using them in our letters long after we have stopped using them in speaking to one another.

Key rule of putting yourself in the other fellow's place	These differences and difficulties make even more important for this session the point that we have stressed in the other sessions. **Q. Do you recall what this point is?** *Draw from group or supply the following rule:* - Try to achieve the human touch by putting yourself in the other fellow's place.
Use simple, straight English appropriate for all levels of understanding	Yes, this rule is again the keystone to our approach. One way to do this is to visualize the reader and write to him in a manner suited to his level of understanding. In many instances, however, you won't know enough about the reader to do this. In other instances your "customers" will have such widely varying backgrounds that this would be almost impossible. In most cases the best rule is to write all your letters in simple, straight English and they will be appropriate for readers at any level of understanding. You do not insult your readers - even the most educated ones - by such letters. They may be pleasantly surprised, but they won't be insulted.
What sessions will not cover	In discussing the writing of this type of letter we won't get into the questions of spelling, punctuation, or into schoolbook grammar. Generally, they are not the roots of our problem. Where there are weaknesses in these aspects, good reference books are available.
What sessions will cover	We shall discuss some ways of improving our letters to meet the goal we mentioned earlier - that of making them clear, concise, courteous, and friendly.

THE 4-S FORMULA - SHORTNESS

Topical outline	Discussion Material
The 4-S Formula	These ways can be summarized by saying, "Let's use the 4-S Formula." *Erase the board. Print the following or display a chart prepared in advance.*
-Shortness -Simplicity -Strength -Sincerity	**4 - S** - Shortness - Simplicity - Strength - Sincerity
	This formula is described in an excellent pamphlet called "Plain Letters", which was written for the General Services Administration. Much of the material in these sessions is adapted from this pamphlet.

Tests of length

Let us take the first part of the formula - Shortness. The longer the letter the more difficult it is to understand. This doesn't mean that the only way you can measure length is by counting lines and pages. The tests are whether you say more than need be said and whether it takes too many words for what you say.

Be thrifty, but not stingy with words

Use all the words you need to carry a message clearly, correctly, and courteously, but no more. We might summarize this by saying that you should be thrifty but not stingy with words. Some writers worry that in writing short letters they may be abrupt or curt. Fear of brevity should not be used as an excuse for long-windedness. Abruptness or curtness stem from the tone of a letter. A short letter - properly worded - can be just as courteous and friendly as a long one.

1. Avoid needless words and needless information

The first rule under "Shortness" is--

> SHORTNESS
>
> 1. Avoid needless words and needless information.

Take a look at Example 1, on page 1 of the Workbook which I will now give out.

HANDOUT

Give each trainee a copy of the Workbook for You Meet the Public by Letter, Supplement to TG 5-13.

(The examples and exercises in the Workbook appear in this training guide at the points where they are used. In addition, the guide lists answers to the exercises and, in some instances, comments which may be used in the discussion. The material which does not appear in the Workbook is enclosed in dotted lines; this will eliminate any need for you to look at the Workbook during the discussion.)

Read aloud the original and revised versions of Example 1, below. Ask which words have been eliminated and bring out or supply the reasons indicated.

EXAMPLE 1

Original

If you want a refund, please complete the enclosed application form, Request for Refund, over your signature, and return it to this office at the above address

Isn't this obvious?

The form shows this.

"return" implies this.

(NOTE: The "balloons" do not appear in the Workbook.)

Revised

If you want a refund, please complete and return the enclosed form.

	Now, let's look at Exercise 1, on page 1 and try our hands at trimming down the number of words in the items in the left column. Write your shortened version in the right column. If you think all of the words should be eliminated, put a dash in the right column. In this and the other exercises that you will do you are not expected to finish all the items. The exercises are simply to give you some practice in applying the rules. You will have three minutes for this first exercise. Do as many items as you can in this time. *Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise below; then discuss it for 5 minutes.* *(Keep the discussion of the exercises informal. Let the group respond freely. If some of the group consistently refrain from participating, you can occasionally call for contributions by name. Remember that the answers in this guide are not the only answers and may not even be the best ones. Don't force the "school solutions" on the trainees; encourage them to develop their own answers.)*

EXERCISE 1 - AVOID NEEDLESS WORDS AND NEEDLESS INFORMATION

NOT WORDY	BUT TRIMMED DOWN	
1. It is directed that you don't give up the ship.	Don't give up the ship.	
2. We are attaching hereto	Attached is (or) here is	
3. There is enclosed for your information	Enclosed is (or) here is	
4. It is desired to invite your attention to	_____	These openings are stilted and can usually be omitted.
5. I wish to assure (inform) (advise) that	_____	
6. It should be noted that	_____	
7. I have before me your letter of . . .	_____	(This opening is pompous)
8. I should like at this time to state	_____	(Don't announce it. Just say it.)
9. duly received	received	(How do you duly receive something?)
10. far-reaching character	far-reaching	
11. a high degree of perfection	perfection	(Absolutes do not require qualification.)
12. I have to recommend	I recommend	

EXERCISE 1 (Continued)

NOT WORDY	BUT TRIMMED DOWN
13. again in the future	again
14. still continues	continues
15. strict compliance	compliance
16. is presently employed	is employed
17. We are in receipt of	We received . . . . .
18. Please arrange to return	Please return . . . . .
19. We are not in a position to	We cannot . . . . .
20. We will take steps to	We will . . . . .
21. anticipate ahead	anticipate
22. ask the question	ask
23. cooperate together	cooperate
24. many in number	many
25. necessary essentials	essentials
26. repeat again	repeat
27. strict accuracy	accuracy
28. very latest	latest

2. Don't repeat what is said in a letter you receive

The second rule under "Shortness" is--

> 2. Don't make a habit of repeating what is said in a letter you answer.

As an instance of this, take the original version of Example 2, on page 2.

Read aloud, or ask one of the group to read aloud, the original version.

EXAMPLE 2

Original

This is in reply to your letter of August 11, 1955, in which you requested a copy of the publication entitled "The Craftsmanship of Letterwriting." We are sorry to tell you that we have no more copies of this publication, which is out of print.

Information is also requested in your letter as to the approximate publication date of the stenographer's manual. This manual will be published in the late fall. We shall send you a copy as soon as it is ready.

Q. What is the pattern of this reply?

Repeat the first question, answer the first question; repeat the second question, answer the second question.

Now look at the revised version.

Read aloud, or ask one of the group to read aloud, the revised version.

EXAMPLE 2

Revised

We regret that "The Craftsmanship of Letterwriting" is out of print.

We will send you the stenographer's manual when it is published in the late fall.

Q. What is the difference in this reply?

This begins easily and naturally. It gets to the point quickly. It answers the questions directly without rehashing them. This can usually be done. Most veterans don't carry on a heavy correspondence with the VA and will know exactly what you're talking about when you start immediately with your answer.

Suppose, though, that you do want to refer to the incoming letter. Avoid stilted openings such as *Reference is made to your letter.* Instead try one of these--

a. Refer to inquiry by date only

a. Refer to the inquiry by its date only, as *Thank you for your letter of June 10.*

b. Make the reference to letter the letter the subject of opening sentence

b. Make the reference to the incoming letter the subject of your opening sentence, as *Your letter of September 3, telling about your exrerience in on-the-job training was very informative.*

c. Refer to inquiry indirectly

c. Refer to the inquiry indirectly, as *The Craftsmanship of Letterwriting, which you asked for in your letter of August 11, is out of print.*

See if you can apply these rules to Exercise 2, on page 2. Write your version in the space on the right. Also, don't forget our first rule about avoiding needless words and information.

Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise and 5 minutes to discuss it. In this and succeeding exercises encourage the trainees to apply the rules already discussed. Don't, however, anticipate the rules not yet discussed.

EXERCISE 2 - DON'T REPEAT WHAT IS SAID IN A LETTER YOU RECEIVE

DON'T REHASH	GET TO THE POINT
1. Reference is made to your letter of September 10, 1955, in which you requested a copy of_____. The desired copy is enclosed.	1. Here is the copy of _____ requested in your letter of September 10, 1955.

EXERCISE 2 (Continued)

DON'T REHASH	GET TO THE POINT
2. Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of April 12, 1955, and we are enclosing application for out-patient dental care which please fill out and return to this office in order that we may have the necessary information to request your dental records and secure a dental rating.	2. Please fill out and return to this office the enclosed application for outpatient dental care. The information in this application is necessary to secure your dental records for establishing a dental rating.
3. Reference is made to your letter of July 3, 1955, submitting suggestions for improving the publication, VA Pamphlet _____. After due consideration and careful review a number of the suggestions are being adopted.	3. Thank you for your letter of July 3, 1955. We are changing VA Pamphlet _____ in line with many of your excellent suggestions.
4. Reference is made to your letter dated March 9, 1955, copy enclosed, requesting a certified copy of letters of administration in connection with the estate of William Henry French. Enclosed is the requested document in compliance with your request.	4. As you requested March 9, 1955, a certified copy of letters of administration for the estate of William Henry French is enclosed.
5. This is in reference to your letter of June 17, 1954, in which you express your opinion regarding the difficulties you are encountering because of prevailing economic conditions.	5. Your letter of June 17, 1954, about the high cost of living touches on a subject of real concern to most of us.
6. Reference is made to your letter dated March 14, 1950, copy enclosed. The account of Carl Allen Wetzel is now located at this office. The veteran died February 18, 1950.	6. Carl Allen Wetzel, about whom you inquired March 14, 1950, died February 18, 1950. His records are now located in this office.

3. Beware of roundabout prepositional phrases	The third rule under "Shortness" is-- 3. Beware of roundabout prepositional phrases. Example 3 on page 3 shows how these phrases can be replaced by a single preposition or by other parts of speech or can even be omitted. *Discuss Example 3.*

EXAMPLE 3

The Finance Officer spoke to me in regard to (about, concerning) your proposal to reduce the clerical cost in connection with (of) auditing vouchers.

EXAMPLE 3 (Continued)

On a few occasions (occasionally) we had trouble getting train reservations, but in the majority of instances (usually) we reached the field stations in time to begin conference at 9 a.m.

Please tell us how many man-hours are spent in connection with auditing vouchers.

Point out that in this last sentence the underlined phrase can be omitted.

See if you can do a similar replacement job for Exercise 3 on page 3.

Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise and 5 minutes to discuss it.

EXERCISE 3 - BEWARE OF ROUNDABOUT PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

	INSTEAD OF A PHRASE	USE A WORD
1.	with regard to	about, concerning, on
2.	on the part of	for, among
3.	with reference to	on, about, concerning
4.	in view of	because, since
5.	in the event of	if
6.	in order to	to
7.	on behalf of	for
8.	in accordance with	with, by
9.	by means of	with, by
10.	in the case of	if, in
11.	in the matter of	in
12.	for the purpose of	for

4. Watch out for nouns and adjectives that derive from verbs

The fourth rule under "Shortness" is--

> 4. Watch out for nouns and adjectives that derive from verbs.

There are some words that derive their noun and adjective forms by adding endings like *ing, ion, tion, ent, ency*, and *able* to the verb. This is best illustrated by a couple of examples. Take the verb *agree* and the noun form *agreement*. We can write *we agreed*, but too often we write *we reached an agreement*. *We agreed* uses the basic verb; it is shorter and clearer. As another example take the verb *suit* and the adjective form *suitable*. We can say *This is suitable for you*, but it is better to say *This suits you*.

Exercise 4 on page 3, uses the pick-up verbs that are most used to link nouns and adjectives to a sentence. See if you can convert them to the basic verb.

Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise and 5 minutes to discuss it.

EXERCISE 4 - WATCH OUT FOR NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES THAT DERIVE FROM VERBS

NOT THIS	BUT THIS
1. hold a meeting	meet
2. take action on	act on
3. has a tendency to	tends to
4. is negligent in	neglects
5. make a reply	reply
6. gives his answer to	answers

5. Don't qualify your statements with irrelevant "ifs"

The fifth and last rule under "Shortness" is--

> 5. Don't qualify your statements with irrelevant "ifs."

Many times it is necessary to qualify your letters with "if." Suppose you tell a veteran that he has a right to appeal a certain action.

Q. What else might you tell him?

- What he must do, if he wishes to appeal.

Many times, however, the "ifs" are unnecessary. For example, it is an unnecessary caution to write, "This information applies if there are no changes in the law prior to the time you become eligible for benefits."

There are no rules to determine when an "if" is pointless. It is a matter of asking, "Is this 'if' necessary?", and then applying good judgment.

Closing of session

In our next session we shall study the second part of the 4-S Formula - Simplicity.

Bring your Workbooks with you to the next session. If you wish, you can complete in the meantime the items we didn't have time to finish today.

Close session.

SESSION IV

YOU MEET THE PUBLIC BY LETTER

(Continued)

SIMPLICITY

Topical outline	Discussion Material
	Give a brief summary of Session III.
	The next part of the 4-S Formula is "Simplicity". The more complex a letter the more difficult it is to understand. One of the things you can do to simplify your letters is--
1. Know your subject well so you can discuss it confidently and naturally	SIMPLICITY 1. Know your subject well so you can discuss it confidently and naturally.
	Many of you have a specialized language for your work. These specialized words may result from the laws with which you work or they may be peculiar to your profession or occupational group. Often they are simple words which have been given a special meaning.
	These words are a form of shorthand which usually carry a precise meaning to the people in your group. The terms become so familiar that you may think that everybody understands them. To a member of the public, however, they may be meaningless. In a real sense you are the interpreter for the public and must know your subject so well that you can discuss it in simple, everyday language.
	For example, a doctor may tell another doctor that you have an *occipital contusion*, but he tells you that you have a *bruise on the back of your head.*
	Q. What are some of the specific things you can do to reach the goal set by this first rule?
	Draw out or supply the answers below. The material under the answers may be used for discussion.
a. Study	a. Study. Study all new laws and rules that you will be called upon to explain. Make sure of their meaning. Think of simple ways to explain them.
b. Use simple, everyday language	b. Replace technical, specialized, or unfamiliar terms with simple, everyday language. Ask yourself if your words and phrases are familiar to your readers. Avoid the temptation to carry over into your letters the language of laws and regulations. Throw away *hereto* and *therein. In lieu of* can be changed to *in place of* and *prior to* can become *before.*

c. Explain, define, or use examples

c. Explain, define, or use examples.

There will be instances when you can't avoid technical words. When this happens, explain what they mean, or define them, or use examples to get across your meaning.

d. Don't quote gobs of laws, regulations, and instructions

d. Don't quote gobs of laws, regulations, and instructions.

Your reader isn't interested in a long story about Title Whatsit of Public Law Whosis. He wants to know whether he does or doesn't get what he's asking for. Again, this guide is not an inflexible one. For example, there may be times when you do have to refer to a certain law or regulation, and you know that your reader isn't familiar with it. Here, of course, you would have to quote and might even have to give additional explanations to make your letter complete. Don't quote, however, unless you have to, and don't quote at greater length than you have to.

Let's see what we can do with the items in Exercise 5, on page 4 of the Workbook.

Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise and 5 minutes to discuss it.

EXERCISE 5 - REPLACE TECHNICAL, SPECIALIZED OR UNFAMILIAR TERMS WITH SIMPLE, EVERYDAY LANGUAGE

	NOT THIS	BUT THIS
1.	pursuant to our agreement	as we agreed
2.	hold in abeyance	wait, postpone action
3.	interrogate the claimant	ask (question) him
4.	be cognizant of	know, notice, be aware of
5.	such agreement	this agreement
6.	said application	this application
7.	per your request	as requested
8.	subsequent to	after

In addition to "hereto" and "therein" list others of the "here_____" and "there_____" family that can be thrown away.

herewith	hereon
herein	therewith
hereby	thereof
hereof	thereon

The terms in Exercise 5 are the kind that many people might fall into the habit of using. Let's discuss some which relate directly to your work.

Give some terms appropriate for the group or for members of the group. Ask the group to put them in simpler language. A few examples of the type of terms you might use and of suggested rewording are as follows:

NOT THIS	BUT THIS
Request a redetermination.	Ask to have your claim reviewed.
You are now medically infeasible.	You are now physically unable to . . . . .
The delimiting date for beginning training . . .	The deadline for beginning training . . . . .

You may not get much response to the question, because, as mentioned, the specialized terms may be so familiar to the group that they assume they are familiar to others. If this happens, point it out and go directly to a reading of the original and revised version of Example 4 below, which appears on page 4 of the Workbook.

EXAMPLE 4

Original

You are eligible with a numerical rating of 85. You have been placed on the register and will be certified when within reach.

Revised

You received a mark of 85 and have been placed on the list of those who passed the examination. Names will be sent to fill jobs beginning with those who received the highest mark and so on down the list.

Notice that the revised version of Example 4 is longer than the original version.

Q. Does this mean that we have not followed the first part of the formula - shortness?

Draw out or supply the following answer:

- No, because we have said that you should use all the words you need to carry a message clearly, correctly, and courteously, but no more.

In line with our experiment you may find it helpful, when you have a chance, to draw up a list of the terms peculiar to your work and then to find plainer ways of expressing them.

2. Use short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs

The second rule under "Simplicity" is--

> 2. Use short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs.

We mentioned before the tendency to use big words to impress the reader.

We stated that this is more likely to make him angry than to impress him. In addition, it makes our writing more difficult to understand.

None of us talks about his *remuneration*. It's plain pay. We wouldn't say we are *domiciled* in the country. We simply live there. If it's good taste to talk with little words, it is also good taste to write letters with them.

Perhaps Exercise 6 on page 5 includes some of your king-size favorites. Let's try to write down some regular-size substitutes.

Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise and 5 minutes to discuss it.

EXERCISE 6 - USE SHORT WORDS

NOT KING SIZE	BUT REGULAR SIZE	NOT KING SIZE	BUT REGULAR SIZE
accomplished	done	limited	small
accumulate	gather	locality	place
acquaint	tell, inform	locate	find
ameliorate	improve	materialize	happen
approximately	about	modification	change
ascertain	learn	numerous	many
assistance	help, aid	objective	aim
commence	begin	possess	have
commitment	promise	practically	almost, nearly
communication	letter, telegram, etc.	proceed	go
contribute	give	procure	get
demonstrate	show	promulgate	issue
determine	decide	regarding	about
develop	happen	respecting	about
endeavor	try	secure	get
equivalent	equal	submitted	sent
evacuate	remove	substantial	large
expedite	hasten, hurry	sufficient	enough
furnish	give	terminate	end
inadvertency	error, mistake	utilize	use
indicate	show	verification	proof
initiate	begin	visitation	visit

Again the matter of judgment enters the picture. The problem is to find the word which best carries the meaning. *Don't* throw aside a word *just* because it is long; *do* try to think of a shorter word that carries the meaning as well.

The rules we have discussed will help you write short sentences, particularly the rule on avoiding needless words and needless information. Also, don't forget that your reader does not have the inflection of your voice to use as a guide. Pause for breath by using periods. Try to write sentences of not more than 21 words in length, but don't go to the extreme of making them choppy.

Let's edit the sentences in Exercise 7 on page 5 and try to shorten them by using periods or by using fewer words.

Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise and 5 minutes to discuss it.

EXERCISE 7 - USE SHORT SENTENCES

Edit the following items and shorten the sentences:

The editing shown below does not appear in the Workbook.

1. Morale is both an individual and a group possession, each interacting upon the other [, and it] would be difficult, for example, to maintain a high group morale among individuals who were harassed by personal worries. Studies in the field of industrial personnel show that failure during work hours may be due to conditions of a personal nature and wholly unrelated to occupation [, but, on] the other hand, a group morale may help tide over an individual who is perplexed and distressed by personal matters.

. It

. On

2. The content of top-level supervision has been changing over the past twenty-five years [inasmuch as the] trend is to delegate more authority to line supervisors [allowing] executives to use their time for planning and directing.

. The

. This allows

3. [Although these] pamphlets have been prepared to help a veteran in his interview with an employer [, because] we could not foresee the demand they are not available in quantity at present [, but we] will be glad to reprint additional copies if enough veterans ask for them.

These

. Because

. We

4. [It is requested that all] Forms 20-XX [in use at the present time be destroyed subsequent to] receiving revised Forms 20-XX.

Destroy

after

Long paragraphs can be broken up easily. Remember that all sentences in a paragraph should relate to a single idea, but that does not mean all sentences related to one idea must be kept in one paragraph. Try to break your paragraphs so that they average not more than 7 lines.

This doesn't mean that you will have to count words and lines. Simply look over the page. Do many sentences run over two lines? Do the paragraphs look forbidding?

Again let's mention the importance of meaning. *Don't* break up sentences and paragraphs just because they are long; *do* break them up if it makes the meaning clearer or the letter easier to read.

3. Be compact

The third rule under "Simplicity" is--

> 3. Be compact. Don't separate closely related parts of sentences.

The three sentences in Example 5 on page 5 show the change that can result from the different location of a word. The sentences are the same except that the word "only" is in a different spot.

Q. What are the different meanings of these sentences?

Through discussion bring out the meanings indicated below on the right.

EXAMPLE 5

a. Rogers only came to the office on Tuesday.

Rogers was the only one who came to the office on Tuesday.

b. Rogers came to the office only on Tuesday.

Rogers didn't go anyplace other than the office on Tuesday.

c. Rogers came to the office on Tuesday only.

Rogers didn't go to the office on any days other than Tuesday.

The word "only" is a single-word modifier which is troublesome. The most troublesome, however, are the group-word modifiers.

In Exercise 8 on page 5 we have some rules for controlling troublesome modifiers. Let's apply these rules to the examples.

Read each rule in succession. Ask the group how the sentence could be improved by applying the rule. After the group agrees on a revision tell them to write it in the right hand column.

This exercise, unlike the preceeding ones, should be completed. Therefore, it may take more time. You may have to use questioning to help the trainees. For example for item 3 you could ask--

"What is the subject?" (Applications.)

"What is the verb?" (Were accepted.)

"How can we get them closer together?"

EXERCISE 8 - BE COMPACT. DON'T SEPARATE CLOSELY RELATED PARTS OF SENTENCES

CONFUSED	BETTER
Boil them down, shortening the sentence as well as simplifying it.	
1. Mr. Harris, who is the attorney for the defendant, said he would appeal.	Mr. Harris, the defendant's attorney, said he would appeal.
2. The delay in answering your letter, which is to be regretted, was not because of our lack of interest.	The regrettable delay in answering your letter was not caused by our lack of interest.
Keep the key verb near its subject and object or within easy reading distance.	
3. Applications from handicapped persons in the nearby cities were also accepted.	Applications were also accepted from handicapped persons in the nearby cities.
4. The supervisor believed, as did members of his staff during the rush season, that it was necessary to work overtime.	Like members of his staff, the supervisor believed that it was necessary to work overtime during the rush season.
Don't try to say too much in one sentence. (Make a new sentence out of the modifier.)	
5. When a disability annuitant recovers, his annuity is continued for a period not exceeding one year, provided he is not reemployed by the Government during this period, in order to give him an opportunity to find a position.	When a disability annuitant recovers, his annuity is continued temporarily (not more than one year), to give him an opportunity to find a job. If he is reemployed by the Government within the year, his annuity stops.
Keep an unmistakable relationship between the modifier and the modified.	
6. Historians may be cheated of many valuable papers by hiding them in file cabinets.	Historians may be cheated of many valuable papers hidden in file cabinets.
7. The enclosed booklet explains what the family should do when the worker dies to collect insurance.	The enclosed booklet explains what the family should do to collect insurance when the worker dies.

The fourth and last rule under "Simplicity" is--

4. Tie your thoughts together

> 4. Tie your thoughts together.

If you do this, your reader can follow you from one thought to another without getting lost. There are three ways of doing this. The first is called--

a. Parallel construction

a. Parallel construction.

In this method the first statement prepares you for what is to come. The following sentences are constructed in the same or a similar way. Example 6 on page 6 illustrates this method.

Read Example 6 aloud, and point out the use of parallel construction.

EXAMPLE 6

Suburbia has many recreational facilities. Two parks provide picnic areas and scenic attractions. A swimming pool, golf course, and many tennis courts are located within the city. Several fine fishing lakes and streams are nearby. Game is plentiful in the surrounding forest areas.

This method is most useful in reports. The second method uses--

b. Echoes

b. Echoes.

As indicated by the name, this method repeats a word from the last sentence. You can also use a word that stands for a word or words in the last sentence, or words that suggest a relationship to the last sentence.

Example 7 on page 6 shows the use of this method.

Read aloud example 7, below. Ask the group to identify the echo words and to tell how they connect the sentences. By questioning bring out fact that words that echo the last thought should be kept near the beginning of the new one.

EXAMPLE 7

The report of the committee has been received. The chairman of this [committee] is Mr. Judson, whose judgment is very sound. [He] tells me that the plans for our building are well drawn. [They] may require some changes because of a reduced budget. [This] should not take long.

- committee → A word from the first sentence.
- He → The pronoun stands for Mr. Judson.
- They → The pronoun stands for plans.
- This → The pronoun stands for the last sentence.

(NOTE: The "balloons" do not appear in the Workbook.)

c. Guideposts	The last method of tying your thoughts together is by the use of-- c. Guideposts. These are words that prepare your reader for the turn the new thought will take. Exercise 9 on page 6 shows the use of this method. *Read exercise 9 through explaining the use of the underlined guide word. Then ask the trainees to fill in additional guide words of the same type in the space provided. Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise and 5 minutes to discuss it. During the discussion bring out reasons why "however" and "therefore" should not be overworked and should not be used indiscriminately.*

EXERCISE 9 - GUIDEPOSTS

EXCEPTIONS - Guideposts signifying an exception to what has just been said or implied:

The question was easy; but (: however, still, even so, nevertheless :) none of us knew the answers.

CAUSE OR EFFECT - Guideposts putting the reader on notice that the new thought states the cause or effect of what has just been said:

We found no Federal codes to govern these cases; thus (: therefore, consequently, : hence, accordingly, so :) the State laws alone must decide them.

TIME OR PLACE - Guideposts telling the reader where he is in order of what has gone before:

The property was first appraised. Next (: then, afterwards, subsequently, : secondly :) the question of ownership was settled.

ADDITIONS - Guideposts warning the reader that more is to be added to the thought in the last sentence:

The letter is too long; besides (: moreover, furthermore, what's more, and, too :) look at the misspelled words.

Closing of session	In our next session we shall study the remaining two parts of the 4-S Formula - Strength and Sincerity. Bring your Workbooks with you to the next session. Again, if you wish, you can complete in the meantime the items we didn't have time to finish today. *Close session*

SESSION V

YOU MEET THE PUBLIC BY LETTER

(Concluded)

STRENGTH

Topical outline	Discussion Material
1. Use concrete, specific words	*Give a brief summary of Session IV.* The third part of the "4-S" formula is "Strength". If you use weak words, if you hedge unnecessarily, and if you hide your answers, then your reader will have difficulty getting the meaning you intended to convey. One of the things you can do to make your letters stronger is-- STRENGTH 1. Use concrete, specific words. When we were children we tended to use a few words for many situations. This is illustrated by the story of the teacher who said, "You students use two words for everything. One is 'swell' and the other 'ain't'." A student then asked, "Well, what are the words?" "Swell" has been replaced in turn by "cute", "keen", "hot" and "cool", and undoubtedly future generations will have many similar words of this type. Unfortunately, we do not lose our fondness for these vague words when we grow up. We often use words that have so many meanings or are so general that the exact thought is often not clear. For example, suppose we ask somebody to "handle" a request. Should he review it to see that it has all necessary information, should he check to see that it meets legal requirements, should he approve or disapprove it, or just what should he do? It takes more effort, but we should try to use concrete, specific words that carry our meaning exactly. Let's try our hand at converting some of the more common generalities in Exercise 10 on page 7. *Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise and 5 minutes to discuss it.*

EXERCISE 10 - USE CONCRETE, SPECIFIC WORDS

VAGUE	MORE PRECISE
1. I am of the opinion	I believe (think) . . . . .
2. Your interesting letter	Your constructive (thoughtful, challenging, delightful, etc.) letter . . . . .

EXERCISE 10 (Continued)

VAGUE	MORE PRECISE
3. It was nice of you	It was good (kind, considerate, etc.), of you.
4. Experience has indicated	Five stations have reported . .
5. Instances of disease are infrequent.	There has been no smallpox and only one case of typhoid fever.
6. Our turnover compares favorably with the government average.	Our turnover is . . . percent which is . . .percent less than the government average.
7. Your application is under consideration.	We are reviewing (examining, checking) your application.
8. We shall appreciate your giving this matter your attention.	Please complete and return the application (or) We shall appreciate your comments on this plan.

	In addition to vague words there is the problem of generalities. For example, the rule might be that an application must be filed within 30 days of the date of the applicant's letter or within 90 days of the date of original application, whichever is later. There is a temptation to quote such a rule and let the applicant figure out the specific date. Resist the temptation; remember that the letter is intended for one person. Figure out the specific date and tell him. Similarly, you can write about "absence of satisfactory evidence" when you're talking about a group of cases, but if you're writing about one man, say, if possible, what specific evidence was lacking.
2. Use more active verbs	Another way to strengthen your letters is by our second rule-- 2. Use more active verbs. The greater strength gained by using an active verb in place of a passive is shown by the alteration of Leigh Hunt's well-known poem in Example 8 on page 7. *Read example 8 and ask which form is stronger.*

EXAMPLE 8

ACTIVE

Jenny kissed me when we met
Jumping from the chair she sat in
Time you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in:
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad
Say that health and wealth have missed me
Say I'm growing old, but add
Jenny kissed me.

EXAMPLE 8 (Continued)

PASSIVE

I was kissed by Jenny when we met
Jumping from the chair she sat in
Time you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in:
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad
Say that health and wealth have missed me
Say I'm growing old, but add
I was kissed by Jenny.

In the active form Jenny, the subject, is performing the action; in the passive form the subject is receiving the action. It is easy to spot the stronger form in this example. It is not as easy to put verbs to work in our own writing. See what you can do to put them to work in Exercise 11 on page 8, and particularly see if you can get rid of the preposition "by", that little friend of the passive verb.

Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise and 5 minutes to discuss it.

EXERCISE 11 - USE MORE ACTIVE VERBS

NOT PASSIVE	BUT ACTIVE
1. The meeting was attended by Mr. Jones.	Mr. Jones attended the meeting.
2. The lower court's decision was upheld by the Supreme Court.	The Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision.
3. Your letter was read by the manager.	The manager read your letter.
4. Your application was approved by this office.	We approved your application.
5. It is believed by this office that	We believe that . . . . .
6. It is understood that	I understand that . . . . .
7. It is desired that we receive	We would appreciate receiving . . . . .
8. An immediate reply would be appreciated by this office.	We would appreciate an immediate reply.
9. The question was raised by you.	You raised the question.

Don't get the idea that you should never use passive verbs. Example 9 on page 8 gives some illustrations of their use.

Read Example 9 aloud. If group understands it, go on. If group doesn't understand it, discuss as necessary.

EXAMPLE 9

Passive verbs are useful:

1. When the doer or the action is less important than the receiver.

   Mr. Smith's oldest child is called John. (Here the receiver of the action, "The oldest child", is more important that the doer "Mr. Smith".)

2. When needed emphasis is gained by putting the name of the act or of the doer at the end of the sentence.

   Divorce laws are enacted by the States. (This wording emphasizes the fact that the laws are not Federal.)

3. When the doer is not known or may not be named.

   Much has been said for and against the Taft-Hartley Act.

3. Don't explain your answer before giving it

The third rule under "Strength" is--

> 3. Don't explain your answer before giving it.

Give your answer; then explain if necessary. Think of your reaction when somebody told you a story and kept adding detail after detail. You probably thought, "When is he going to get to the point?"

Keep your readers from thinking this. Whenever possible, get to the point right away; then explain if necessary. You may find out that with this method you don't need as much explanation as you thought. Let's compare the two approaches shown in Example 10 on page 8.

Read Example 10 and discuss it with the group.

EXAMPLE 10

DON'T BEAT AROUND THE BUSH

This is in reference to your application for . . . . .

Public Law_____ provides (you then quote the law to show who is eligible for what and in what amount.)

(And at last you say.) In accordance with the above your application has been approved for payments in the amount of $_____, effective _____.

GET TO THE POINT

Your application for_____ has been approved. You will receive (amount and kind of payment) beginning (date).

(Now, if you add anything, your reader will be patient. By getting to the point you will be more likely to limit the additional information to that needed by your reader.)

4. Don't hedge

The last rule under "Strength" is--

> 4. Don't hedge.

There will be times when you have to use such expressions as "normally" and "ordinarily". They should be used, however, only when there is a reason. When you hedge needlessly, your statements lose force. You raise needless doubts in your reader's mind and cause needless correspondence.

We mentioned "normally" and "ordinarily" as hedge words; let's write down some other examples in Exercise 12 on page 9 so that we can be on the lookout for them.

Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise and 5 minutes to discuss it.

EXERCISE 12 - DON'T HEDGE

In addition to "normally" and "ordinarily" write down other hedge words.

apparently	as a usual case	in most cases
it appears	generally	in many instances
seemingly	in general	seems to indicate
it seems	as a rule	commonly
usually		

SINCERITY

Topical outline	Discussion Material
	The last part of the "4-S" formula is "Sincerity". We mentioned before the goal of writing letters which are clear, concise, courteous, and friendly. Sincerity is the part of the formula which is most important in making your letters courteous and friendly. It will help you most in achieving the human touch. It will be most effective in convincing your readers that they are dealing with people who have a genuine interest in serving them with patience, sympathy, and understanding. In trying to achieve the human touch you should, when writing, keep in mind the way you talk. We have a demonstration which shows what happens when you don't do this. *Present the demonstration outlined in Appendix V-A.*
	Nobody can tell you exactly how to make your letters sincere. We can discuss, however, how to avoid some of the things that rob letters of sincerity. First-- SINCERITY 1. Be human.
1. Be human	
a. Use personal pronouns	a. Use personal pronouns: Remember that you're writing to a human being even if you don't meet him face-to-face. Use pronouns like *you, he* and *she*, rather than talking about *applicants* and *veterans*. Don't depersonalize yourself either. Write *I* or *we* instead of *this office* and *this agency*.

b. Use proper names

b. Use the proper names of the people you write about: Write *James Smith* and *Mr. Green* instead of *the claimant* and *the above-named veteran.*

c. Use names that stand for human beings

c. Use names that stand for human beings: *Child, wife, husband* and so on.

d. Avoid the impersonal passive

d. Avoid the impersonal passive, such as "it is believed", "it is understood": We mentioned this under "using more active verbs." Gain the personal touch by writing *I believe* or *we understand.* If you do have to refer to the agency use *This agency recommends* rather than *It is recommended by this agency.*

Let's try some practice on this with Exercise 13 on page 9. In some of these examples you will be able to add a human touch by using a proper name. Use whatever name you wish.

Allow 3 minutes to do the exercise and 5 minutes to discuss it.

EXERCISE 13 - BE HUMAN

NOT IMPERSONAL	BUT HUMAN
1. The applicant must file application by	You must apply by . . . . .
2. The above-named veteran's account is now located at this office.	The account of William Henry French is now located at this office.
3. Mr. Young's dependent.	Mr. Young's daughter.
4. It is suggested by this office	This office suggests . . . . . (or better yet) We suggest.
5. The personal signature of each payee is required.	Your personal signature is required.
6. It is believed by the undersigned . . .	I believe . . . . .

2. Admit mistakes

The second rule under "Sincerity" is--

2. Admit mistakes.

Suppose you notified John M. Smith of a shortage on his account, which was actually a shortage on John N. Smith's account. You discover the error and write to John M.

Exercise 14 on page 9 shows four ways in which you could reply. The first three are "don't" ways; the last is a "do" way. Let's see if we can fill in the headings.

Q. What would you be doing if you used the first way of answering?

Allow the group time to read item a of Exercise 14 below. Then draw answers such as "you would be avoiding the mention of a mistake", "you would be ignoring the mistake."

EXERCISE 14 - ADMIT MISTAKES

a. Don't ignore mistakes.

Please disregard the notice forwarded to you on April 1, 1954. The records of this office indicate that your account is in good order.

a. Don't ignore mistakes	Yes, the first heading is "Don't ignore mistakes." **Q. What happens to your reader when you do ignore mistakes?** - He is puzzled about exactly what happened. - He doesn't know exactly what has happened. - He may be angry at getting incomplete information. - He probably develops a poor opinion of the VA. **Q. What would you be doing if you used the second way of replying?** *Allow the group time to read item b of Exercise 14 below. Draw answers such as "You would be hiding your mistakes", "You would be covering up by implying that somebody else is responsible."*

b. Don't cover up mistakes.

It has come to the attention of our Accounts Division that the notice forwarded to you on April 1, 1954, was in error. A check reveals that your account is in good order.

b. Don't cover up mistakes	Yes, this heading is "Don't cover up mistakes." **Q. What happens to your reader when you do try it?** - He wonders how "it came to your attention." - He still feels that it is the fault of the VA, despite efforts to put the blame on the Accounts Division. - He probably develops a poor opinion of the VA. **Q. What about the third way? What would you be doing by using this way?** *Allow the group time to read item c of Exercise 14 below. Draw answers such as, "You would admit the mistake, but then try to 'snow' the reader with a lot of words","You would be giving a lot of explanation that really wouldn't change the mistake."*

c. Don't try to remedy mistakes with meaningless words.

During a recent review of accounts it was discovered that you were notified on April 1, 1954, of an outstanding shortage on your account of $25.00, whereas the account is, in fact, in good order.

It will be appreciated that the large volume of work with which this office is confronted and the current personnel shortage, render it virtually impossible to completely eliminate small errors of this nature, particularly those originating because of a similarity in names. This office wishes to assure you, however, that every effort is being made to give the best possible service and to prevent the recurrence of errors.

c. Don't try to remedy your mistakes with meaningless words	Yes, we might summarize this as "Don't try to remedy your mistakes with meaningless words." **Q. What happens to your reader when you try to do this?** - He gets lost in all your words. - If he doesn't get lost, then he is irritated at your attempts to deceive him. - He probably develops a poor opinion of the VA. **Q. How could we complete the last heading?** *Allow the group time to read item d of Exercise 14 below. Draw the answer "Do admit mistakes."*

d. Do admit mistakes.

We made a mistake in notifying you on April 1, 1954, that your account was overdue $25.00. Our notice must have been confusing to you, because you have always been prompt with your payments. The fact is that your account is in good standing with no payment due until July 1, 1954.

Please accept our apology and our assurance that we will be more careful in the future.

d. Do admit mistakes	Yes, this heading is "Do admit mistakes." When you do "goof," say so in plain language. **Q. What does this type of reply do to your reader?** - He knows exactly what has happened. - He knows what has been done about it. - He is more likely to be convinced of your sincerity. - He has a much better opinion of the VA than if any of the other ways of replying had been used. - He is even likely to have a good opinion of the VA. He knows that mistakes can happen and he knows that it is the reliable person or agency which frankly admits them.

3. Don't overwhelm your reader with intensives and emphatics

The third rule under "Sincerity" is--

> 3. Don't overwhelm your reader with "intensives" and "emphatics".

Intensives include adjectives and adverbs like "highest", "deepest", "very much", "extremely", "undoubtedly", and so on. When used too freely, they lose their effect. To go back to the story that I told when we were talking about concrete words, when everything is "swell", then nothing is "swell". Use intensives with discretion.

The same caution applies to emphatics which call special attention to a statement. An example is item 6 in Exercise 1, "It should be noted that . . .".

Q. Do we have any other emphatics in Exercise 1?

Through discussion let the group point out items 4, 5, and 8 as emphatics.

An occasional well chosen emphatic, like an occasional intensive, will have the desired effect. But useless emphatics give the reader the impressions that we are padding, that we are laboring to put our facts across, or that we are trying to convince ourselves.

Q. In Exercise 1, what did we decide could be done with useless emphatics?

Wait for answer that they can be omitted.

Yes, we can omit them and rephrase the sentence to place the emphasis on the important words.

4. Strive for a courteous and friendly tone

The last rule under "Sincerity" and the most important rule in meeting the public by letter is--

> 4. Strive for a courteous and friendly tone.

The question of tone gets to the question of how a letter sounds. Does it sound impertinent or tactless, or does it sound the way VA letters should--that is, courteous and friendly.

A humorous, true example of an unfriendly letter is shown in Example 11 on page 10. It was written by Sitting Bull to Col. E. S. Otis, in command of a military wagon train, four months after the disaster popularly known as "Custer's Last Stand."

Read Example 11.

EXAMPLE 11

I want to know what you are doing travelling on this road. You scare all the buffalo away. I want to hunt in this place. I want you to turn back from here. If you don't I will fight you again. I want you to leave what you have got here and turn back from here.

I am your friend

SITTING BULL

I mean all the rations you have got and some powder. Wish you would write as soon as you can.

This letter meets the rules that we have discussed. It is short, simple, strong, and personal. However, despite Sitting Bull's protests, it is not friendly in tone.

The letter also brings out the point that while the rules we have discussed up till now are important in determining the final tone of a letter, they are not sufficient in themselves. This is because tone is not what you say, but how you say it. Tone is the "something extra." It is what reveals your attitude toward your reader.

Here again, nobody can tell you exactly how to strike the appropriate tone. We can discuss, however, some of the faulty tones and what to do to avoid them.

You must think how your reader will feel when he reads what you have written. Writers may often become accustomed to certain phrases and sentences without realizing the jarring effect they produce on the reader. Even more jarring is the translation which the reader makes. Let's try translating the items in Example 12 on page 10.

Discuss Example 12. For each item ask the group to suggest for the writer's words the translation which the reader might make. Then discuss what can be done to avoid the faulty tone. A sample translation and discussion material is shown below. Allow 10 minutes. If this time is insufficient, it will be worthwhile taking some extra time, because this is one of the most valuable discussions.

EXAMPLE 12

1. You deserve no consideration.

Translation: If you want to be nasty, we can play at that game too. You won't get any sympathy from us. (or) You have sent in such a flimsy claim that we shouldn't even take a second look at it.

Discussion: Never reply to an unreasonable or offensive letter by adopting the same tone. This just starts a chain reaction. In addition, it doesn't do the job - that is, it doesn't give service.

EXAMPLE 12 (Continued)

2. Your misunderstanding of our policy prompts your accusation that . . . . .

Translation: If you weren't so dull that you couldn't understand our policy, you wouldn't accuse us of . . . . .

Discussion: See discussion under 1 above.

3. Mr. Doe, whom you recommend, is not qualified.

Translation: What are you wasting our time for recommending unqualified persons like Mr. Doe?

Discussion: Why go out of the way to contradict? The writer probably didn't know the requirements of the job in which Mr. Doe was interested. Use a positive approach. Thank the writer for his interest. Suggest other positions for which Mr. Doe might be qualified or other agencies where he might apply.

4. Do you actually mean it when you say . . . . .

Translation: You couldn't be so stupid as to actually mean that . . . . .

Discussion: Don't question meanings or motives.

5. You misunderstood our letter.

Translation: Our letter was perfectly clear. You're just too dumb to understand it.

Discussion: Perhaps he did misunderstand the letter but it doesn't serve any purpose to tell him so. Besides, if he did misunderstand it, maybe it wasn't a good letter. Avoid reference to the fact that information was supplied in an earlier letter by such statements as "You were informed as stated in letter of _____," "As you have been repeatedly informed," "Your attention is again called to the fact that . . . . .".

6. You will send us this information without fail by . . . . .

Translation: You better send us this information by _____, or we'll know what to do about you, Buddy.

Discussion: Don't command him. Give him the facts. Ask him for the information in a courteous manner, and tell him why it is necessary to have it by a certain date.

EXAMPLE 12 (Continued)

7. We do not wish to comply with your request for . . . . .

Translation: We could grant your request, but we just don't want to be bothered with it.

Discussion: Don't be arbitrary. Explain why you can't do what he wants. Don't let him feel he's getting a brush-off.

8. Your undated letter . . . . .

Translation: We have received your letter, which you were too careless to date.

Discussion: Why bother telling him that his letter was undated? If he doesn't want to date letters, that's his business. Our business is to give him information.

9. We exceedingly regret the necessity of calling your attention to . . . . .

Translation: A thousand pardons, honorable sir. Forgive this humble servant for daring to mention that . . . . .

Discussion: Be sparing with apologies. Sympathize, but don't be obsequious. Complete information is more useful than regrets.

10. You will understand after further thought that we cannot . . . . .

Translation: We'll explain again, and if you apply your little brain maybe you'll get it this time.

Discussion: We are supposed to be experts in our fields; our readers are not. Don't try to impress with expertness. A friendly, understandable letter is much more impressive.

11. We must tell you that you may defer payment until . . . . .

Translation: We hate to tell you this. However, since you twisted our arm, we will grudgingly admit that you don't have to pay until . . . . .

Discussion: If he has extra time to pay, tell him willingly. There is no need to tell him grudgingly.

12. Your letter was addressed to the wrong office. We do not employ geologists.

Translation: Whatever made you think we would employ geologists? Go away, boy, you bother us.

Discussion: Try to help him; tell him who does employ geologists. If you don't know, tell him you are sorry you can't help.

EXAMPLE 12 (Continued)

13. You claim that you did not receive the application.

Translation: You can't fool us. We know you received the application and promptly lost it.

Discussion: Why express doubt? You would resent the veteran's saying this to the VA and you. He resents it also. Take his word for it and send him another application.

WHAT ABOUT SUPERVISORS?

Topical outline	Discussion Material
What can supervisors do to help subordinates apply 4-S Formula?	**Q. What about supervisors? What can they do to help their subordinates apply the 4-S Formula?** *Draw out from the group or supply the following answers:*
-Show the way	- Try to write clear, concise, courteous, and friendly letters yourself. Your subordinates will not be encouraged to make an effort unless you show them the way.
-Add to the performance requirements the goal of writing clear, concise, courteous and friendly letters	- Be sure that your subordinates understand and accept the goal of writing such letters as part of their performance requirements.
-Concentrate on major weaknesses, not on minor points	- Remember that it costs money to revise. Concentrate on major weaknesses rather than on minor points.
-Don't force your style on others	- Remember that no two people express themselves exactly alike. Don't try to force your subordinates to use your style.
-Ask the writer to make revisions, rather than making them yourself	- Ask the original writer to revise unsatisfactory letters. Give suggestions for improvements. If you revise the letters yourself, your subordinates do not have an opportunity to learn. Encourage them to develop a critical attitude; a good writer is his own most careful critic.
-Give credit	- Give credit. Commend good letters or good portions of letters. Circulate copies of good letters.
-Develop lists of familiar terms to replace technical terms	- Develop with your subordinates lists of familiar terms which can be used to replace technical terms.
-Discuss new procedures and policies	- Discuss new procedures or policies with your subordinates so that they know them well enough to write about them confidently and naturally.

CLOSING

Topical outline	Discussion Material
Further uses of the Workbook	The Workbook is now yours to take with you. As I have mentioned before, you may wish to complete the items that we didn't have time to finish during these sessions. If you do this and wish to discuss your answers, please call on me. The Workbook has on pages 11 and 12, a summary of the 4-S Formula that we have discussed. You will find it helpful to review this summary from time to time as a way of appraising your writing. The Workbook also has a reminder list on page 13. You can place on the left side of this list the roundabout phrases, technical terms, long words, etc., that you wish to avoid; on the right side you can put the substitutes you wish to use.
Rules of 4-S Formula are guides which don't eliminate need for discretion, judgment, and unceasing effort	Remember that the rules we discussed as part of the 4-S Formula are not a series of "don'ts" and "nevers". They are guides. They will help you, but they will not eliminate the need for discretion and judgment. The rules will not produce overnight changes either. It takes time and unceasing effort to alter habits. Don't feel that you must polish and repolish your very next letter until it is a shining gem; remember that you must also answer letters promptly. You can try to improve your letters without taking any longer to write them.
The basic approach is-"Try to achieve the human touch by putting yourself in the other fellow's place"	Above all, remember that the rules themselves depend on a way of expressing the genuine interest we all feel in serving veterans. We can do this by the approach we have stressed in all these sessions-"Try to achieve the human touch by putting yourself in the other fellow's place." This means that for every letter you write you must ask yourself the question, "How would I feel if I received this letter?" This approach is the spark that will keep the machinery of this big organization humming the way it should. It will help you put to work the rules that we have discussed. They, in turn, will make your meetings with the public by letter pleasant for you and for the public, and your letters will make friends for the VA.
Close session	*Close session. (If you plan to hold additional sessions for practice meetings on letters, make necessary announcements and arrangements. See Appendix V-B for suggestions for practice meetings.)*

APPENDIX V-A
(TG 5-13)

DEMONSTRATION

INSTRUCTIONS There are three participants, a visitor, a Personnel Officer, and yourself. If possible, the visitor and the Personnel Officer should not be members of the training group. As indicated in the dialogue below you compare the Personnel Officer's spoken words with his correspondence style by displaying the statement as he would have written it in a letter. These statements for display should be prepared in advance by using a chart pad, flip chart, flannel board, or other suitable device.

DIALOGUE

Instructor: In this demonstration we have a Personnel Officer. (Gestures to Personnel Officer seated at a table.) He will give some information to a visitor. He does this very well. He has a friendly, pleasant manner, and he speaks clearly and simply. Somehow a change comes over this man when he writes a letter. He falls into many of the traps that we have discussed. I will compare his two styles for you during the demonstration.

Visitor: (Enters through door and looks around.)

Personnel Officer: Hello. Come right in. What can I do for you?

Visitor: (Sits in chair beside table.) My name is John Jackson. I mailed an application to you on January 6.

Personnel Officer: Just a second, Mr. Jackson, and I'll get your application. (Pretends to look through a file.) Yes, here it is.

Instructor: That's the way he says it, but here's the way he writes it. (Display and read the following:)

> Reference is made to your inquiry of this date concerning the status of your application for employment, dated January 6, 1956.

Visitor: Could you tell me what happened to the application?

Personnel Officer: Certainly. You were rated as qualified for Gadget Analyst, GS-5, and we're holding your application so we can consider it when an opening occurs.

Instructor: But look what happens in a letter. (Display and read the following:)

> The records of this office indicate that said application has been rated as eligible for the position of Gadget Analyst, GS-5, and has been placed in the applicant file.

Visitor: What happens when an opening occurs?

Personnel Officer: Well, for this particular job we would send the applications of the qualified persons to the supervisor who has the vacancy to fill, and he would select the one he thinks can do the best job.

Instructor: This is the way that he writes it. (Display and read the following:)

> As vacancies arise applications will be referred for consideration.

Visitor: Can you tell me what my chances are of getting a job?

Personnel Officer: I'm afraid I can't give you a very specific idea right now, Mr. Jackson. We have our full quota of Gadget Analysts on duty, and it will depend mainly on whether one of them should leave us. (Shrugs in an indeterminate manner.)

Instructor: But when he takes his pen in hand, this happens. (Display and read the following:)

> It is not possible at this time to make an estimate concerning the possibilities of selection.

Visitor: You'll let me know if anything happens, won't you?

Personnel Officer: Surely. We'll be very glad to do that.

Instructor: In a letter this comes out a little differently. (Display and read the following:)

> Should the contingency of consideration eventuate you will be appropriately notified.

Personnel Officer: I'm sorry I can't give you anything more definite, Mr. Jackson. A little later, I may be able to give you a better idea of your prospects.

Instructor: Compare this with the letter version. (Display and read the following:)

> It is regretted that this office is unable to furnish more specific information at the present time.

Visitor: Well, I suppose you can't give me any more information than you have. Thank you very much. (Shakes hands with Personnel Officer.)

Personnel Officer: Glad to have met you, Mr. Jackson. If you'd like to give me a ring in about three weeks, I'll be glad to let you know what the situation is then.

DISCUSSION

After the demonstration is completed conduct a brief discussion. Bring out the following points through questioning:

1. When we talk to people it is much easier to use a warm, friendly tone than it is when we write to them.

2. We don't - and shouldn't - write *exactly* the way we talk. When we talk we do such things as using incomplete sentences and substituting a gesture for a word. (You can point out examples in the demonstration.)

3. We should, however, try to get into our letters the warmth and friendliness of our face-to-face conversations.

APPENDIX V-B
(TG 5-13)

PRACTICE SESSIONS

When additional sessions are used, it is most effective to select local examples. Review recent correspondence, choose letters which can be improved, and change or delete names to protect the guilty. Then turn the group loose on them. Remember that there is no one best way of revising these letters. Remember also that the object is not to convert them to perfect letters, but to improve them.

If for some reason, you don't wish to use local examples, here are some ready examples taken from VA sources. They relate to particular functions, but even without specialized knowledge much can be done with them.

Example 1

The official records relating to your service received from the service department, together with the other evidence in your claims file, have been very carefully considered but as it is not shown that you now have a disease or injury incurred in service in line of duty, or one that has been aggravated thereby, to a 10% or more degree, as required by law before disability pension may be paid, it has become necessary to enter a disallowance of your claim.

Example 2

Veterans Administration regulations provide that in those cases of veterans who have been approved for training under the provisions of Public Law 16 and are currently in a discontinued status and subsequently make an application for approval for training under the provisions of Public Law 346 and it is shown by the evidence in the veteran's file that because of his disability the contemplated training under provisions of Public Law 346 will not contribute materially to his restoration of employability his application should be denied.

Example 3

If after you have contacted the above associations you find that they will not favorably consider making you the loan and if you are in a position to furnish the required down payment plus an amount equal to 10% of the estimated cost of construction which in construction loan cases must be placed in escrow to assure payment of the construction cost should any contingencies arise such as increased costs of materials and labor, you may then write us a letter requesting an application for a direct loan and submit therewith any letters of rejection which you may have received from private institutions.

Example 4

1. Award account cards pertaining to the case of the above-named veteran were forwarded to your office on February 27, 1950.

2. This office has been advised that check No. 55,123,936, dated February 28, 1950, in the amount of $50.00, issued in favor of the veteran was cancelled on March 16, 1950, under Schedule Number 3029-1959.

3. This information is forwarded for the completion of your records.

Example 5

1. The award account card pertaining to the case of the above veteran was recently received in this office.

2. A notation on the award card indicates an adjustment was made by your office for the period December 7, 1949 through May 31, 1950, in the amount of $348.00.

3. It is requested that this office be advised as to the date and number of the check issued to cover this adjustment.

Example 6

Receipt is acknowledged of Forms 572 indicating your new address. However, the Veterans Administration requires the personal signature of each payee over his or her request for change of address; therefore, it is requested that each of you sign one of the enclosed Forms 572 and return them to this office.

Compensation and Insurance payments will be suspended pending the return of these forms.

Example 7

With reference to your application for vocational rehabilitation under Public Law 16, you are advised that you have been placed in status "Training Declined" for the reason that you have declined induction into training.

If at some future date you reapply for induction into training under Public Law 16, this is to inform you that if your disability rating has been reduced to less than a compensable degree or even if your disability rating has not been reduced to less then a compensable degree but you are informed that you are found not in need of vocational rehabilitation, you will no longer be entitled to training under Public Law 16. The termination date for Public Law 16 training is July 25, 1956, for most veterans.

Example 8

Your application for a course of education or training under the provisions of Public Law 550 has been received.

It is necessary to refer your application to the Veterans Benefits Office, Veterans Administration, Washington, D. C., for final determination, since the place of training selected by you is outside the continental limits of the United States.

You are hereby advised to make no personal commitments with respect to your proposed course until your application therefor has been approved by the Veterans Administration.

ERIC Clearinghouse
JUL 11 1973
on Adult Education

231820

Supplement to
TRAINING GUIDE 5-13

WORKBOOK

for

YOU MEET THE PUBLIC BY LETTER

Veterans Administration, Washington 25, D. C.

EXAMPLE 1

Original

If you want a refund, please complete the enclosed application form, Request for Refund, over your signature, and return it to this office at the above address.

Revised

If you want a refund, please complete and return the enclosed form.

EXERCISE 1 - AVOID NEEDLESS WORDS AND NEEDLESS INFORMATION.

NOT WORDY	BUT TRIMMED DOWN
1. It is directed that you don't give up the ship.	
2. We are attaching hereto	
3. There is enclosed for your information	
4. It is desired to invite your attention to	
5. I wish to assure (inform) (advise) that	
6. It should be noted that	
7. I have before me your letter of	
8. I should like at this time to state	
9. duly received	
10. far-reaching character	
11. a high degree of perfection	
12. I have to recommend	
13. again in the future	
14. still continues	
15. strict compliance	
16. is presently employed	
17. We are in receipt of	
18. Please arrange to return	
19. We are not in a position to	
20. We will take steps to	
21. anticipate ahead	
22. ask the question	

EXERCISE 1 (Continued)

NOT WORDY	BUT TRIMMED DOWN
23. cooperate together	_____
24. many in number	_____
25. necessary essentials	_____
26. repeat again	_____
27. strict accuracy	_____
28. very latest	_____

EXAMPLE 2

Original

This is in reply to your letter of August 11, 1955, in which you requested a copy of the publication entitled, "The Craftsmanship of Letterwriting." We are sorry to tell you that we have no more copies of this publication, which is out of print.

Information is also requested in your letter as to the approximate publication date of the stenographer's manual. This manual will be published in the late fall. We shall send you a copy as soon as it is ready.

Revised

We regret that "The Craftsmanship of Letterwriting" is out of print.

We will send you the stenographer's manual when it is published in the late fall.

EXERCISE 2 - DON'T REPEAT WHAT IS SAID IN A LETTER YOU RECEIVE

DON'T REHASH	GET TO THE POINT
1. Reference is made to your letter of September 10, 1955, in which you requested a copy of_____. The desired copy is enclosed.	_____
2. Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of April 12, 1955, and we are enclosing application for outpatient dental care which please fill out and return to this office in order that we may have the necessary information to request your dental records and secure a dental rating.	_____
3. Reference is made to your letter of July 3, 1955, submitting suggestions for improving the publication, VA Pamphlet_____. After due consideration and careful review a number of the suggestions are being adopted.	_____
4. Reference is made to your letter dated March 9, 1955, copy enclosed, requesting a certified copy of letters of administration in connection with the estate of William Henry French. Enclosed is the requested document in compliance with your request.	_____

EXERCISE 2 (Continued

DON'T REHASH	GET TO THE POINT
5. This is in reference to your letter of June 17, 1954, in which you express your opinion regarding the difficulties you are encountering because of prevailing economic conditions.	
6. Reference is made to your letter dated March 14, 1950, copy enclosed.	
The account of Carl Allen Wetzel is now located at this office.	
The veteran died February 18, 1950.	

EXAMPLE 3

The Finance Officer spoke to me in regard to (about, concerning) your proposal to reduce the clerical cost in connection with (of) auditing vouchers.

On a few occasions (occasionally) we had trouble getting train reservations, but in the majority of instances (usually) we reached the field stations in time to begin conference at 9 a. m.

Please tell us how many man-hours are spent in connection with auditing vouchers.

EXERCISE 3 - BEWARE OF ROUNDABOUT PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

INSTEAD OF A PHRASE	USE A WORD
1. with regard to	
2. on the part of	
3. with reference to	
4. in view of	
5. in the event of	
6. in order to	
7. on behalf of	
8. in accordance with	
9. by means of	
10. in the case of	
11. in the matter of	
12. for the purpose of	

EXERCISE 4 - WATCH OUT FOR NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES THAT DERIVE FROM VERBS

NOT THIS	BUT THIS
1. hold a meeting	
2. take action on	
3. has a tendency to	

EXERCISE 4 (Continued)

NOT THIS	BUT THIS
4. is negligent in	_____
5. make a reply	_____
6. gives his answer to	_____

EXERCISE 5 - REPLACE TECHNICAL, SPECIALIZED OR UNFAMILIAR TERMS WITH SIMPLE, EVERYDAY LANGUAGE

NOT THIS	BUT THIS
1. pursuant to our agreement	_____
2. hold in abeyance	_____
3. interrogate the claimant	_____
4. be cognizant of	_____
5. such agreement	_____
6. said application	_____
7. per your request	_____
8. subsequent to	_____

In addition to "hereto" and "therein" list others of the "here____" and "there____" family that can be thrown away.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

EXAMPLE 4

Original

You are eligible with a numerical rating of 85. You have been placed on the register and will be certified when within reach.

Revised

You received a mark of 85 and have been placed on the list of those who passed the examination. Names will be sent to fill jobs beginning with those who received the highest mark and so on down the list.

EXERCISE 6 - USE SHORT WORDS

NOT KING SIZE	BUT REGULAR SIZE	NOT KING SIZE	BUT REGULAR SIZE
accomplished		limited	
accumulate		locality	
acquaint		locate	
ameliorate		materialize	
approximately		modification	
ascertain		numerous	
assistance		objective	
commence		possess	
commitment		practically	
communication		proceed	
contribute		procure	
demonstrate		promulgate	
determine		regarding	
develop		respecting	
endeavor		secure	
equivalent		submitted	
evacuate		substantial	
expedite		sufficient	
furnish		terminate	
inadvertency		utilize	
indicate		verification	
initiate		visitation	

EXERCISE 7 - USE SHORT SENTENCES

Edit the following items and shorten the sentences:

1. Morale is both an individual and a group possession, each interacting upon the other, and it would be difficult, for example, to maintain a high group morale among individuals who were harassed by personal worries. Studies in the field of industrial personnel show that failure during work hours may be due to conditions of a personal nature and wholly unrelated to occupation, but, on the other hand, a group morale may help tide over an individual who is perplexed and distressed by personal matters.

2. The content of top-level supervision has been changing over the past twenty-five years inasmuch as the trend is to delegate more authority to line supervisors allowing executives to use their time for planning and directing.

3. Although these pamphlets have been prepared to help a veteran in his interview with an employer, because we could not foresee the demand they are not available in quantity at present, but we will be glad to reprint additional copies if enough veterans ask for them.

4. It is requested that all Forms 20-XX in use at the present time be destroyed after receiving revised Forms 20-XX.

EXAMPLE 5

a. Rogers only came to the office on Tuesday.

b. Rogers came to the office only on Tuesday.

c. Rogers came to the office on Tuesday only.

EXERCISE 8 - BE COMPACT. DON'T SEPARATE CLOSELY RELATED PARTS OF SENTENCES

CONFUSED	BETTER

Boil them down, shortening the sentence as well as simplifying it.

1. Mr. Harris, who is the attorney for the defendant, said he would appeal. _____

EXERCISE 8 (Continued)

CONFUSED	BETTER
2. The delay in answering your letter, which is to be regretted, was not because of our lack of interest.	_____

Keep the key verb near its subject and object or within easy reading distance.

3. Applications from handicapped persons in the nearby cities were also accepted.	_____
4. The supervisor believed, as did members of his staff during the rush season, that it was necessary to work overtime.	_____

Don't try to say too much in one sentence. (Make a new sentence out of the modifier.)

5. When a disability annuitant recovers, his annuity is continued for a period not exceeding one year, provided he is not reemployed by the Government during this period, in order to give him an opportunity to find a position.	_____

Keep an unmistakable relationship between the modifier and the modified.

6. Historians may be cheated of many valuable papers by hiding them in file cabinets.	_____
7. The enclosed booklet explains what the family should do when the worker dies to collect insurance.	_____

EXAMPLE 6

Suburbia has many recreational facilities. Two parks provide picnic areas and scenic attractions. A swimming pool, golf course, and many tennis courts are located within the city. Several fine fishing lakes and streams are nearby. Game is plentiful in the surrounding forest areas.

EXAMPLE 7

The report of the committee has been received. The chairman of this committee is Mr. Judson, whose judgment is very sound. He tells me that the plans for our building are well drawn. They may require some changes because of a reduced budget. This should not take long.

EXERCISE 9 - GUIDEPOSTS

EXCEPTIONS - Guideposts signifying an exception to what has been said or implied:

The question was easy; but (_____) none of us knew the answers.

CAUSE OR EFFECT - Guideposts putting the reader on notice that the new thought states the cause or effect of what has just been said:

We found no Federal codes to govern these cases; thus (_____ _____) the State laws along must decide them.

EXERCISE 9 (Continued)

TIME OR PLACE - Guideposts telling the reader where he is in order of what has gone before:

The property was first appraised. Next (_____) the question of ownership was settled.

ADDITIONS - Guideposts warning the reader that more is to be added to the thought in the last sentence:

The letter is too long; besides (_____) look at the misspelled words.

EXERCISE 10 - USE CONCRETE, SPECIFIC WORDS

	VAGUE	MORE PRECISE
1.	I am of the opinion	_____
2.	Your interesting letter	_____
3.	It was nice of you	_____
4.	Experience has indicated	_____
5.	Instances of disease are infrequent.	_____
6.	Our turnover compares favorably with the government average.	_____
7.	Your application is under consideration.	_____
8.	We shall appreciate your giving this matter your attention.	_____

EXAMPLE 8

ACTIVE

Jenny kissed me when we met
Jumping from the chair she sat in
Time you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in:
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad
Say that health and wealth have missed me
Say I'm growing old, but add
Jenny kissed me.

PASSIVE

I was kissed by Jenny when we met
Jumping from the chair she sat in
Time you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in:
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad
Say that health and wealth have missed me
Say I'm growing old, but add
I was kissed by Jenny.

EXERCISE 11 - USE MORE ACTIVE VERBS

NOT PASSIVE	BUT ACTIVE
1. The meeting was attended by Mr. Jones.	_____
2. The lower court's decision was upheld by the Supreme Court.	_____
3. Your letter was read by the manager.	_____
4. Your application was approved by this office.	_____
5. It is believed by this office that	_____
6. It is understood that	_____
7. It is desired that we receive	_____
8. An immediate reply would be appreciated by this office.	_____
9. The question was raised by you.	_____

EXAMPLE 9

Passive verbs are useful:

1. When the doer or the action is less important than the receiver.

   Mr. Smith's oldest child is called John. (Here the receiver of the action, "The oldest child" is more important than the doer "Mr. Smith.")

2. When needed emphasis is gained by putting the name of the act or of the doer at the end of the sentence.

   Divorce laws are enacted by the States. (This wording emphasizes the fact that the laws are not Federal.)

3. When the doer is not known or may not be named.

   Much has been said for and against the Taft-Hartley Act.

EXAMPLE 10

DON'T BEAT AROUND THE BUSH	GET TO THE POINT
This is in reference to your application for	Your application for _____ has been approved. You will receive (amount and kind of payment) beginning (date).
Public Law_____provides (you then quote the law to show who is eligible for what and in what amount).	(Now, if you add anything, your reader will be patient. By getting to the point you will be more likely to limit the additional information to that needed by your reader.)
(And at last you say.) In accordance with the above your application has been approved for payments in the amount of $_____, effective _____	

EXERCISE 12 - DON'T HEDGE

In addition to "normally" and "ordinarily" write down other hedge words.

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

EXERCISE 13 - BE HUMAN

NOT IMPERSONAL	BUT HUMAN
1. The applicant must file application by	_____
2. The above-named veteran's account is now located at this office.	_____
3. Mr. Young's dependent.	_____
4. It is suggested by this office	_____
5. The personal signature of each payee is required.	_____
6. It is believed by the undersigned	_____

EXERCISE 14 - ADMIT MISTAKES

a. _____

Please disregard the notice forwarded to you on April 1, 1954. The records of this office indicate that your account is in good order.

b. _____

It has come to the attention of our Accounts Division that the notice forwarded to you on April 1, 1954, was in error. A check reveals that your account is in good order.

c. _____

During a recent review of accounts it was discovered that you were notified on April 1, 1954, of an outstanding shortage on your account of $25.00, whereas the account is, in fact, in good order.

It will be appreciated that the large volume of work with which this office is confronted and the current personnel shortage, render it virtually impossible to completely eliminate small errors of this nature, particularly those originating because of a similarity in names. This office wishes to assure you, however, that every effort is being made to give the best possible service and to prevent the recurrence of errors.

d. _____

We made a mistake in notifying you on April 1, 1954, that your account was overdue $25.00. Our notice must have been confusing to you, because you have always been prompt with your payments. The fact is that your account is in good standing with no payment due until July 1, 1954.

EXERCISE 14 (Continued)

Please accept our apology and our assurance that we will be more careful in the future.

EXAMPLE 11

I want to know what you are doing travelling on this road. You scare all the buffalo away. I want to hunt in this place. I want you to turn back from here. If you don't I will fight you again. I want you to leave what you have got here and turn back from here.

I am your friend

SITTING BULL

I mean all the rations you have got and some powder. Wish you would write as soon as you can.

EXAMPLE 12

1. You deserve no consideration.
2. Your misunderstanding of our policy prompts your accusation that . . . .
3. Mr. Doe, whom you recommend, is not qualified.
4. Do you actually mean it when you say . . . . .
5. You misunderstood our letter.
6. You will send us this information without fail by . . . . .
7. We do not wish to comply with your request for . . . . .
8. Your undated letter . . . . .
9. We exceedingly regret the necessity of calling your attention to . . . . .
10. You will understand after further thought that we cannot . . . . .
11. We must tell you that you may defer payment until . . . . .
12. Your letter was addressed to the wrong office. We do not employ geologists.
13. You claim that you did not receive the application.

THE 4-S FORMULA

I. SHORTNESS

1. Avoid needless words and needless information.
2. Don't make a habit of repeating what is said in a letter you answer.
   a. Begin easily and naturally without repeating the questions in the letter.
   b. If you do want to refer to the letter--
      (1) Refer to the inquiry by its date only.
      (2) Make the inquiry the subject of the opening sentence.
      (3) Refer to the inquiry indirectly.
3. Beware of roundabout prepositional phrases.
4. Watch out for nouns and adjectives that derive from verbs.
5. Don't qualify your statements with irrelevant "ifs".

II. SIMPLICITY

1. Know your subject well so that you can discuss it confidently and naturally.
   a. Study.
   b. Replace technical, specialized, or unfamiliar terms with simple everyday language.
   c. Explain, define, or use examples.
   d. Don't quote gobs of laws, regulations, and instructions.
2. Use short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs.
3. Be compact. Don't separate closely related parts of sentences.
4. Tie your thoughts together by--
   a. Parallel construction.
   b. Echo words, and
   c. Guideposts.

III. STRENGTH

1. Use concrete, specific words.
2. Use more active verbs.
3. Don't explain your answer before giving it. Give answers; then explain if necessary.
4. Don't hedge.

THE 4-S FORMULA (Continued)

IV. SINCERITY

1. Be human.
    a. Use personal pronouns.
    b. Use the proper names of the people you write about.
    c. Use names that stand for human beings.
    d. Avoid the impersonal passive.
2. Admit mistakes.
    a. Don't ignore mistakes.
    b. Don't cover up mistakes.
    c. Don't try to remedy mistakes with meaningless words.
3. Don't overwhelm your reader with intensives and emphatics.
4. Strive for a courteous and friendly tone.

REMINDER LIST

All of us have at least a few habits which are contrary to the 4-S Formula. We may be fond of certain technical terms, long words, awkward phrases, etc. We may know that they need improving, but force of habit keeps us from doing much thinking about substitutes.

Here is a method which may help. When you spot such words and phrases in your letters, write them on the left side of this reminder list under "I don't want to use this!" Think of better words and phrases and write them on the right side under "I do want to use this!" Review your list occasionally to make sure you are using the substitutes.

I DON'T WANT TO USE THIS!	I DO WANT TO USE THIS!

(Need more space? Add pages and keep going.)

DEMONSTRATION NO. 1

INSTRUCTIONS

The instructor acts as commentator for the demonstration. There are also required three participants--the information clerk, a man; the first visitor, a man; and the second visitor, a girl. If possible, the three participants should not be members of the training group. It is desirable that the participants have some acting ability and that they memorize the dialogue. This is particularly true for the information clerk and the first visitor. If circumstances do not permit memorization, each participant should have a copy of this handout.

DIALOGUE

1. Instructor: This demonstration uses the "wrong-way Murphy" technique. Murphy is a fictitious character who was used in training films to demonstrate the wrong way of doing things. Let's observe the information clerk in this demonstration and figure out what he is doing wrong so we can discuss later what the correct way is.

   This clerk doesn't work for the VA. As a matter of fact I hope he doesn't work for anybody. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is too horrible to think about.

   For this reason the demonstration describes an imaginary situation in the Office of Space Travel Research. Now that I've prepared you, let's proceed. (Goes to door and calls) Mr. Clerk, won't you come in please.

2. Information Clerk: (Enters room. He isn't badly dressed, but is quite untidy. His hair is rumpled, his tie is askew, and he is generally disheveled. He smiles at the instructor and then glowers at the group.) Not a very intelligent looking bunch, is it? (Goes over and sits at table. Starts shuffling through pile of papers.)

3. Instructor: Next we have a visitor. He has a problem and to him it is a vexing one. He has been having trouble finding the person who can help, so he is somewhat disturbed. (Opens door or gives some other prearranged signal and then sits down with the group.)

4. First Visitor: (Enters with worried look. He calls to the Information Clerk.) Is this the place where I can get information?

5. Information Clerk: (Without looking up.) Yeh.

6. First Visitor: (Crosses over and stands beside the table of the information clerk who continues to shuffle papers. After a while First Visitor sits down and coughs to attract attention.)

7. Information Clerk: (Looks up irritably.) Keep your shirt on. I'm getting to you. (Shuffles papers a few seconds more.) OK. Whadda you want?

8. First Visitor: My name is Richard Roe. This is about something that I've given a lot of thought. Finally, I decided to do something about it.

9. Information Clerk: (While First Visitor speaks, Clerk resumes shuffling papers.) Whadja say?

10. First Visitor: I said I finally decided to do something about it. It's a very difficult thing.

11.	Information Clerk:	They always are.
12.	First Visitor:	Well, I figured that I'm single and I have no dependents, so why not?
13.	Information Clerk:	So why not what? Get to the point, will you.
14.	First Visitor:	You're a civil servant aren't you?
15.	Information Clerk:	Yes.
16.	First Visitor:	Well, how about some civil service?
17.	Information Clerk:	Look at him. He's a comedian too.
18.	First Visitor:	You'd feel differently if our positions were reversed.
19.	Information Clerk:	Well, they're not. So don't worry about that.
20.	First Visitor:	Well, I can't get any courtesy, so I might as well tell you what I want and get it over with. I want to apply to be a crew member for the first space ship.
21.	Information Clerk:	Space ship? They're not accepting applications yet. It will be announced in the papers.
22.	First Visitor:	It was in yesterday's papers. Don't you know about it?
23.	Information Clerk:	(Pauses a second and pulls out a paper) Oh, yeah. Here it is. They're accepting applications beginning today.
24.	Second Visitor:	(The second visitor, a young girl, enters and walks up to table.) Hello, Jimmy darling, you said I could get those papers without waiting.
25.	Information Clerk:	Sure thing, honey. (Hands her some papers) Fill these out and bring them back to me.
26.	Second Visitor:	Thanks, Jimmy darling. (Leaves)
27.	First Visitor:	(Sarcastically) How about me, Jimmy darling?
28.	Information Clerk:	(Turns his gaze away from departing girl.) Oh, yeah. You're a 675.
29.	First Visitor:	A which?
30.	Information Clerk:	You fill out these papers. It says here you take an exam to see if your reactions are OK by testing for spatial perception, psychomotor coordination, visual acuity, and mechanical aptitude.
31.	First Visitor:	What does that mean in English?
32.	Information Clerk:	Search me -- I didn't write it.
33.	First Visitor:	Where do I take these when I get them filled out?
34.	Information Clerk:	On the next floor. They do something with them up there. They'll tell you where to take them.
35.	First Visitor:	Are they pretty strict? What are the chances?

36. Information Clerk: They're supposed to tell you that upstairs, but every screwball in town is applying, and I don't think you've got a chance.

37. First Visitor: Would it help if you looked over my papers when I get them filled out?

38. Information Clerk: I've got other things to do. I've given you too much time already.

39. First Visitor: Yeah! Well it's a good thing you're not in business. You wouldn't get my trade.

40. Information Clerk: It's tough Mac, but it just so happens that there's no other place for you to take your business.

41. First Visitor: Let me tell you -- I pay your salary, Buddy. Some outfit this is. You haven't heard the last of this yet. (Stamps angrily out of the room.)

42. Information Clerk: (Walks over to door.)

43. Instructor: (Stands up and says) Thank you, Mr. Clerk, for showing us how you represent your agency.

44. Information Clerk: Represent? I just work here. I'm going to lunch now. (As he exits says) How about the nerve of that 675? Some people just don't have any courtesy.